

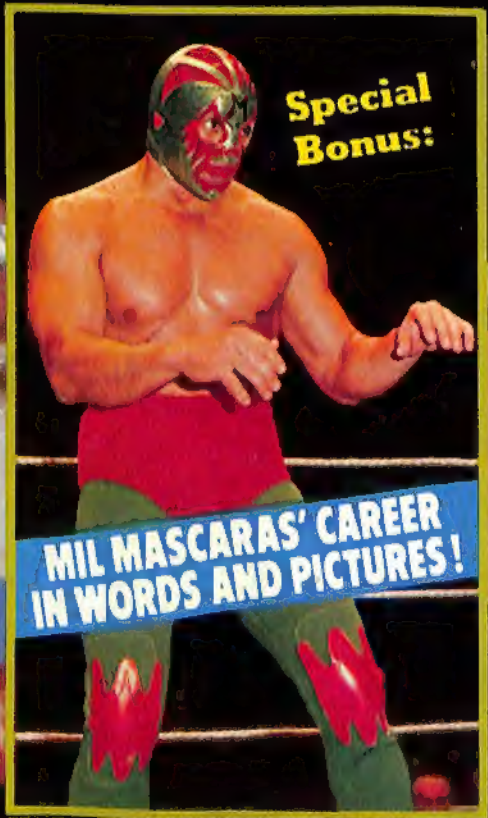


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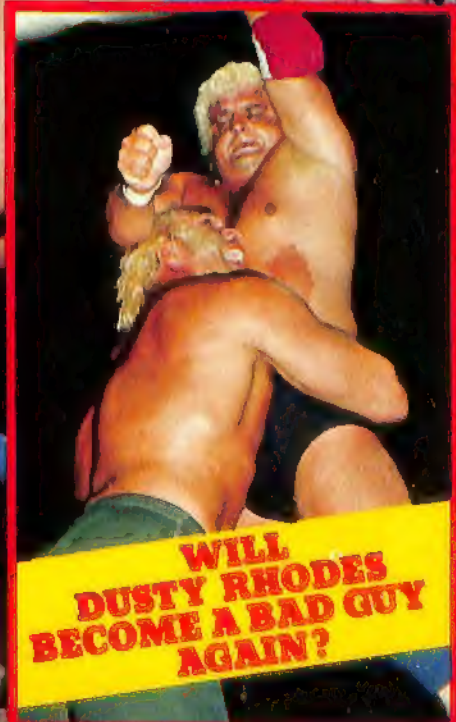
Wrestler

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GET CRUSHED...
BY IVAN
KOLOFF!**



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DUSTY RHODES
BECOME A BAD GUY
AGAIN?**



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THE BEST OF THE **Wrestler**

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says Glen Johnson,
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INTRODUCTION

THE BEST OF THE WRESTLER: THE BEST OF THE BEST!

ONCE AGAIN IT is time to look at the best of THE best! Here are a sensational collection of stories you demanded to have in one collection.

On page 10 is a story that first appeared in our February 1976 super edition, **Not Even A Manager's Safe From Sheik's Fire!** When the maniac from the Middle East uses his mystical powers to throw fire—no one can escape!

I Had To Do This Because He Did This! shows how stubborn two wrestlers can get when the heat of battle reaches its peak. This first caught the fans' eyes in our October 1975 issue.

Professor Tanaka began losing many matches several years ago (by disqualification) because his friends used to run in and help him when the going got rough. That is why Tanaka exclaimed, "**The Next Man Who Helps Me ... Dies!**" It is a vow he meant to keep! That was a great story in the February 1976 issue.



Mighty Igor's manager, Ivan Kalmikoff (above) was burnt by the Sheik's fire. Dusty Rhodes is bloody during his days as an "Outlaw" (below). Will Dusty go back to his rulebreaking ways?



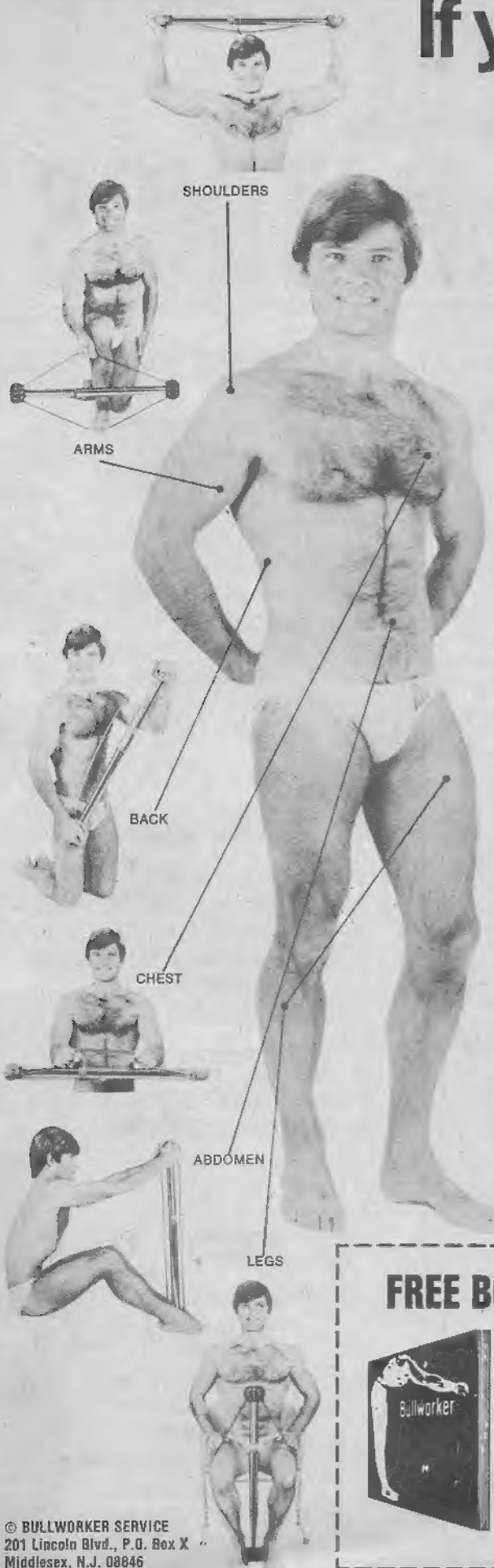
One of the most popular and always asked for features is the pictorial special **Mil Mascaras' Career in Words and Pictures**. When it first appeared in the October 1976 issue, the mail to repeat this feature was tremendous. Now it's here for you to enjoy again and again.

The Violent World Of Jerry Lawler delves into the personality of one of the most complex and interesting individuals to ever grace a wrestling ring. In March 1976 this story was published and the response was overwhelming.

Today he is one of the most loved men in the sport. But fans will always look back at his rulebreaking days and wonder if Dusty Rhodes will ever travel that route again. **The Question Terrifying Wrestling: Will Dusty Rhodes Become A Bad Guy Again?** was in our August 1976 edition and fans still ask the question regularly.

(Continued on page 54)

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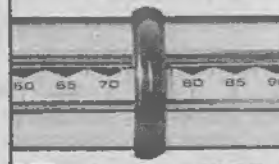
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Champion: BOB BACKLUND

- 1—SPIROS ARION
- 2—GEORGE STEELE
- 3—SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
- 4—DUSTY RHODES
- 5—TATSUMI FUJINAMI (Jr. Heavyweight Champ)
- 6—MIL MASCARAS
- 7—KEN PATERA
- 8—DINO BRAVO
- 9—PETER MAIVIA
- 10—KOBAYASHI

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

Champion: NICK BOCKWINKLE

- 1—CRUSHER
- 2—RAY STEVENS
- 3—BILLY ROBINSON
- 4—PAT PATTERSON
- 5—BOB ORTON JR.
- 6—JIM BRUNZELL
- 7—GREG GAGNE
- 8—BLACKJACK LANZA
- 9—ANGELO MOSCA
- 10—RUFUS R. JONES

MOST POPULAR

- 1—DUSTY RHODES
- 2—ANDRE THE GIANT
- 3—BOB BACKLUND
- 4—MIL MASCARAS
- 5—JACK BRISCO
- 6—CRUSHER
- 7—DINO BRAVO
- 8—PAUL JONES
- 9—MR. WRESTLING II
- 10—SUPERSTAR GRAHAM



GEORGE STEELE



CRUSHER



JACK BRISCO



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

Champion: HARLEY RACE

- 1—DUSTY RHODES
- 2—JACK BRISCO
- 3—RIC FLAIR
- 4—STAN HANSEN
- 5—BLACKJACK MULLIGAN
- 6—PAUL JONES
- 7—RICK STEAMBOAT
- 8—TERRY FUNK
- 9—DICK SLATER
- 10—KEN PATERA

TAG TEAMS

- 1—PAUL JONES & RICK STEAMBOAT
- 2—DINO BRAVO & DOMINIC DeNUCCI
- 3—GREG GAGNE & JIM BRUNZELL
- 4—MIKE GRAHAM & STEVE KEIRN
- 5—JACK & JERRY BRISCO
- 6—THE LUMBERJACKS
- 7—LUKE & SUPERSTAR GRAHAM
- 8—RAY STEVENS & PAT PATTERSON
- 9—THE VALIANT BROTHERS
- 10—RIC FLAIR & GREG VALENTINE

MOST HATED

- 1—KEN PATERA
- 2—DICK SLATER
- 3—RIC FLAIR
- 4—GREG VALENTINE
- 5—THE SHEIK
- 6—KILLER KOX
- 7—CRAZY LUKE GRAHAM
- 8—GEORGE STEELE
- 9—NICK BOCKWINKLE
- 10—PAT PATTERSON

All Ivan Kalmikoff wanted to do was protect his wrestler, Mighty Igor, from The Sheik's illegal tactics. Instead, he brought the wrath—and fire—of The Sheik down upon himself



HAVING FLAMES SHOT in your face and feeling your flesh burn would make anyone go berserk. It almost drove Ivan Kalmikoff insane.

Like any good manager, Ivan wanted to protect his wrestler, Mighty Igor, from The Sheik's many damaging, illegal tactics. Knowing The Sheik's overwhelming fear of snakes, Ivan hatched a plan.

"If The Sheik," Ivan told Igor, "receives any foreign object from his manager, Eddie Creatchman, we will respond in kind. I will place a snake, inside a box, in our corner. As soon as a foreign object is brought in, we let the snake out. With a little luck, we might scare Sheik to death."

Igor agreed wholeheartedly with the plan.

The night of the match, the box was carried into the corner. The Sheik almost had to be carried over the ropes, so scared was he of the reptile.

As he had failed to do at the contract signing, Eddie Creatchman begged the official, "Take the snake away. My man, the most famous

(Continued on page 12)

A shaken and exhausted Ivan Kalmikoff examines the charred flesh covering his face the day after he was the victim of The Sheik's fire and went berserk.

PHOTOS BY DAVE BRYZYNSKI

**NOT EVEN A
MANAGER'S
SAFE
FROM THE
SHEIK'S**

FIRE!

When Your WORST NIGHTMARE Becomes REAL
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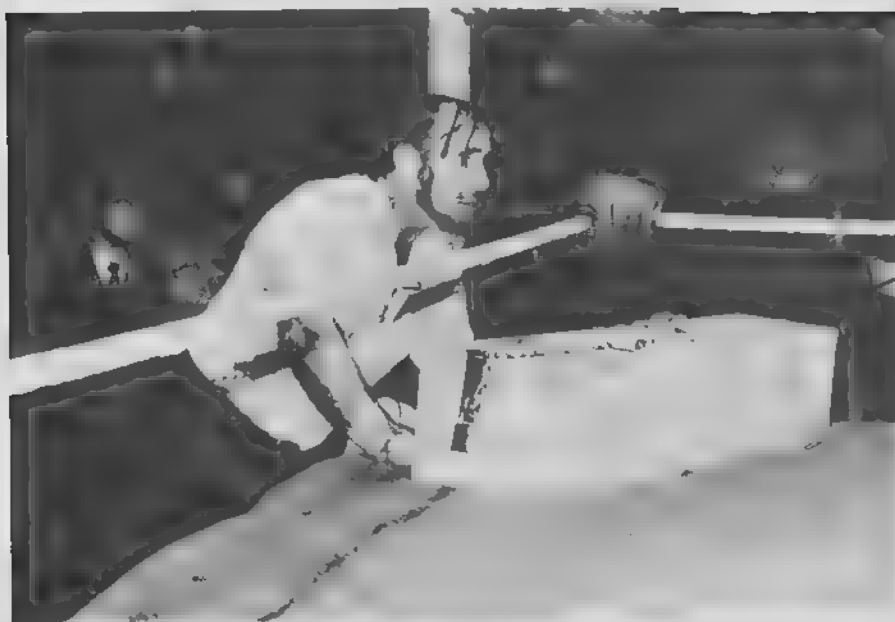
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FIRE!

(Continued from Page 10)



Ivan Kalmikoff brings a box containing a snake into the ring, the one thing which can bring fear to The Sheik's evil heart (above). Sheik punishes Ivan by burning him (right). It took everyone in the dressing room to restrain Ivan after the burning (below).



wrestler in the world, is terrified of have Mr. Kalmikoff's word assuring the beasts. Who can blame him?" us the snake will not be let out of

The referee, repeating what the his strongbox unless a foreign object promoters had said, declared, "We is used by The Sheik. We have no

reason to doubt Mr. Kalmikoff's word."

"Foreign objects!" Creatchman screamed. "Foreign objects! Have you ever known The Sheik, or for that matter any wrestler I've ever managed, to use a foreign object?"

Instead of answering, the official laughed in his face. The match began with the snake in the corner.

The Sheik kept one eye on Igor and one eye on the box. It wasn't too difficult for Igor to trap the terrified wrestler in a bearhug. Before The Sheik even knew what happened, he was the captive of Igor.

Seeing his wrestler in trouble, Creatchman handed him a foreign object. The Sheik is an expert in such situations and grabbed the object like it was a life preserver. It may have been because one shot to the forehead made Igor release his hold.

As soon as the weapon was used, Kalmikoff started to release the snake. The Sheik saw this and went berserk. Ignoring Igor, he ran at Kalmikoff, his face a mask of terror. Before Ivan could release the snake, The Sheik had shot fire - point-blank into his face! The manager screamed in agony and writhed horribly upon the cold concrete floor.

He was taken to the dressing room in a state of shock. Igor followed him in, his face betraying the deep worry he felt.

Once inside, the shock passed. Remaining only was the agony of Kalmikoff's bleeding, burnt flesh. An eerie glaze covered Ivan's eyes. His body began to convulsively struggle as his screams filled the dressing room.

"I'll kill him!" Kalmikoff yelled. "so help me, I'll kill him! I'll kill him now! Let me go!" he screamed at the doctors, who had their hands full trying to restrain the raging, raving manager.

For an hour the doctor and Igor battled with the manager. Because of the damage done by burns, the medical man was afraid of giving Kalmikoff any kind of sedative. Finally, Kalmikoff passed out from exhaustion.

As he watched the burnt, exhausted face of his manager, Igor vowed to himself that someday, somehow, The Sheik would be made to feel sorry he ever learned to throw fire. □

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Before John Tolos goes
on a rampage,
Alberto Madrill suggests
John get his facts
straight

John Tolos claims he attack
Alberto Madrill to repay him
for earlier viciousness on the
part of the Mexican wrestler

"I HAD TO DO THIS

IT USUALLY TAKES little provocation, if any, to turn John Tolos into a brutal grappler without regard to rules or regulations. All that matters to John is seeing his foe doubled over in agony. Against Al Madrill, however, the infamous wrestler felt he was justified in almost killing his victim!

It is impossible to forget the image of Madrill, his legs straddling the corner ring ropes and his head lying on the steel ring post, being beaten from behind by a raging Tolos. With each punch, Al's head banged

against the post, causing the most intense pain to reverberate throughout his skull. Tolos bared his teeth like a jungle animal as he snarled and grunted with each punch. Over and over, his fist came slamming down on to Madrill's body. With each blow, the wrestler's head battered the post while his body convulsed with pain.

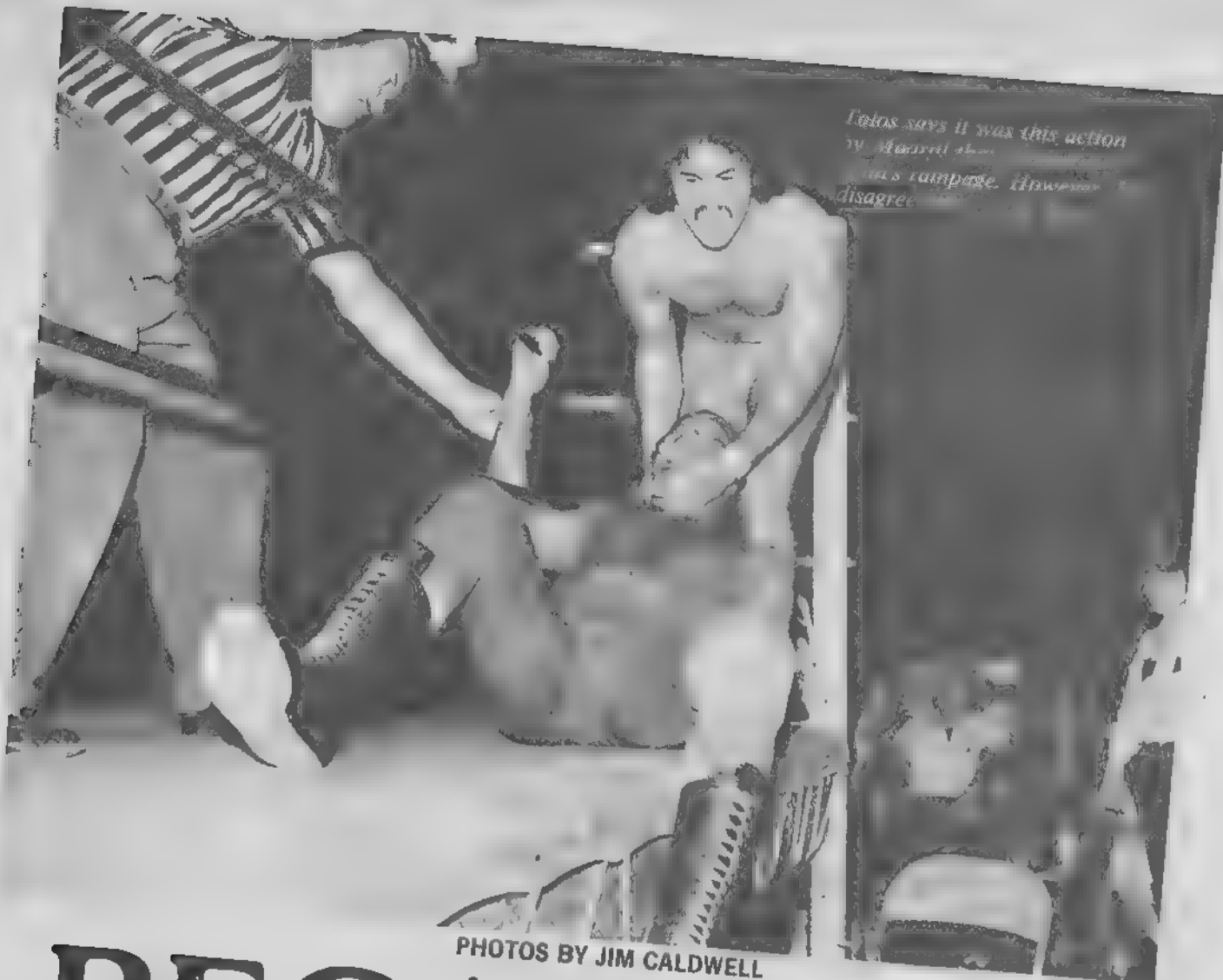
Most people couldn't believe anyone could try to excuse action this cruel and dangerous. However, Tolos believed Madrill deserved every single punch—and more.

"For what that guy did to me," Tolos shouted afterwards, "he

deserved to die! He's lucky I'm such a fine sportsman. If I was less compassionate, he'd be pushing up daisies right now!

"Did you see what he did to me, what he dared to do to the great John Tolos? There I was, outside the ropes and trying to return to the field of battle. Naturally, I expected Madrill to let me get back so we could resume a scientific match. You can imagine my shock and horror when this animal, this louse, leaps over the ropes and attacks me illegally! I've never heard of such a disgusting act!

"He almost killed me! Did you ever see anything so awful in your



*Tolos says it was this action
by Madril that
led to his rampage. However,
disagree.*

PHOTOS BY JIM CALDWELL

BECAUSE HE DID THIS!"

entire life! It makes me ashamed a man who calls himself a wrestler would do anything so rotten. It gives the rest of us, the scientific athletes, a bad name.

"That's why I reacted so strongly. He insulted the sport I love with his low, cheating ways. A man like that must be punished, must be taught a lesson he'll *never* forget.

"Each time I hit that rat I was avenging the good name of wrestling. The same spirit which allowed men to become Crusaders to save the Holy Land in the Middle Ages coursed through my body. I

was a crusader to save the good name of wrestling!"

Not everyone shared Tolos' enthusiasm of his accomplishment or his recollection of events. According to those in attendance, both Madril and Tolos were outside the ropes and both were battling. Madril simply won the upper hand until the referee forced the pair to return within the ropes. Therefore, Tolos had no provocation for his heinous actions!

Fortunately and miraculously, Madril suffered no permanent

damage from the horrible beating. He had to be helped back to the dressing room, but was able, after an hour, to leave the arena without aid. However, he felt too shaken to talk to the press until the next day. And what he said then was short and bitter.

"The next time I meet Tolos," he declared, "will be the last time that animal ever wrestles."

Al would say no more. But what more did he have to say? □



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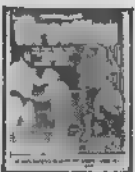
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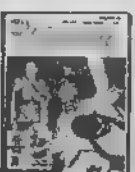
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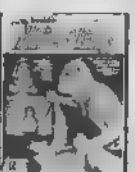
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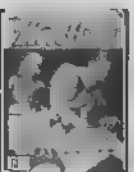
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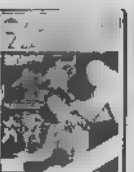
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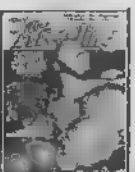
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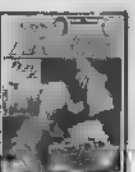
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Professor Toru Tanaka has publicly threatened every friend he has. The story behind this action is as shocking as the statement itself!

PHOTOS BY GENE GORDON



Professor Toru Tanaka has Bill Watts in trouble (above) but loses the match when his good friend interfered. Tanaka was in a state of rage until he invoked the dreaded Japanese Samurai death prayer (right).



TANAKA'S VOW--

"THE NEXT MAN WHO HELPS ME...DIES!"

HIS BODY TREMBLING with rage, Professor Toru Tanaka stood transfixed in the middle of the ring. He had just been disqualified for Mr. Fugi's outside interference—aid, he had neither sought nor needed. Now, he had lost a very important match through no fault of his own!

Tanaka is too proud to beg a referee to reconsider his decision. His anger made that action impossible anyway. He was paralyzed with rage! No one dared go near him to help. Being

around Tanaka at that time was risking getting mauled. When it began looking like Tanaka would remain in the ring all night, he suddenly tore back to the dressing room at top speed. He knocked over at least a dozen fans unfortunate enough to be in the aisles as he ran.

Once inside, Tanaka refused to see the press. Through the closed door, however, Japanese chants could be heard. A Tokyo correspondent, a man who rarely shows emotion, listened

and turned pale. At first he refused to translate the chant or describe its meaning. It took long pleading on the reporters' part before he revealed what was happening.

"It's a sacred Samurai vow," he explained in a whisper, as if afraid to say the words out loud. "I've heard of it, though I never heard it used before. I never thought I would.

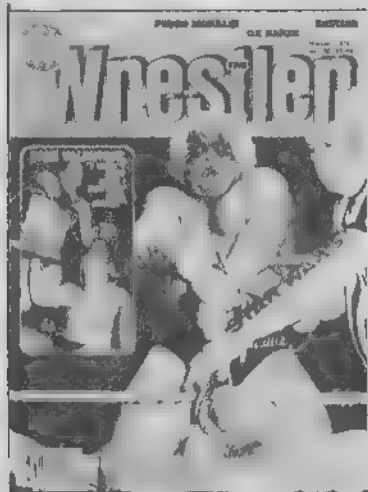
"Tanaka has just sworn by all he holds holy that any man who interferes

(Continued on page 44)

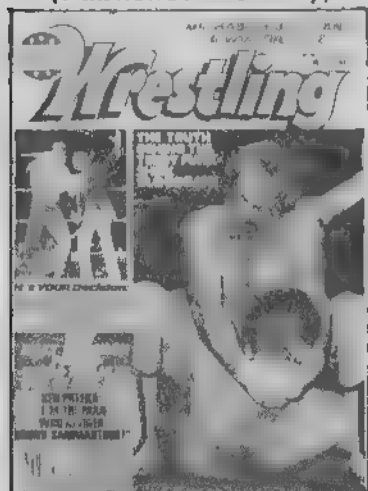
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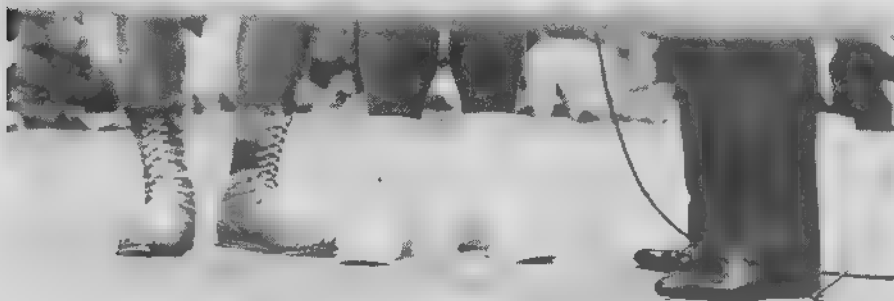
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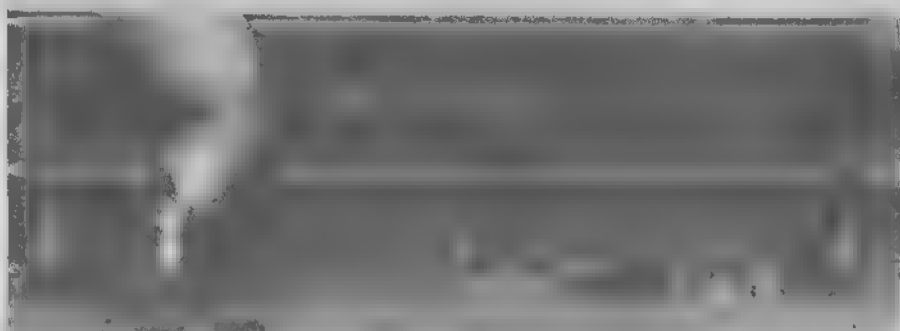
MIL MASCARAS' CAREER IN WORDS AND PICTURES

For the first time, exclusive photos illustrate the greatness of Mil Mascaras as never before. This section is surely destined to become a valued collector's item!

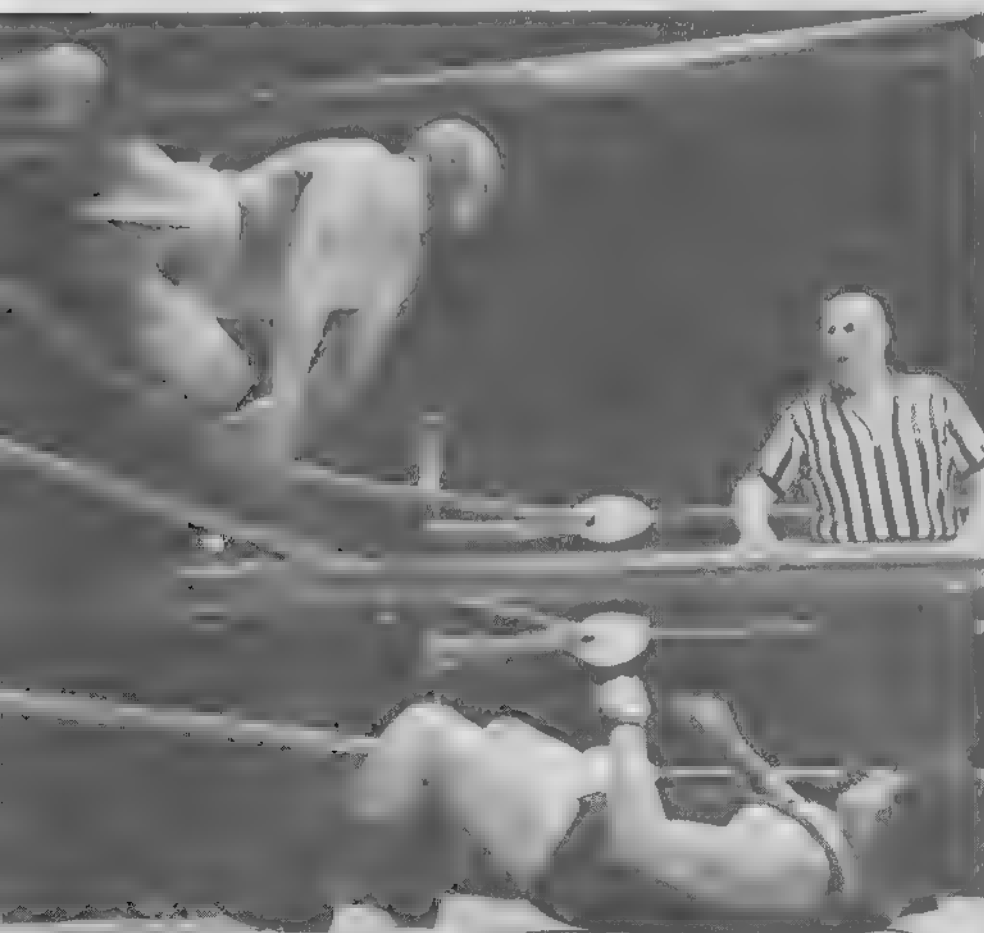


August '68 – Mil and tag team partner Pedro Morales are the subjects of an interview in Los Angeles, California (left). The same year the two teamed in a handicap match against The Convict. Mil's in the driver's seat (above) as he tries to take the huge masked man down

September '69 - The closest he ever came to being unmasked was in a hair match against Black Gordman (below). Gordman lost June '69—Mil dropkicks The Sheik (right) in a wild confrontation.



January '70—The feud against Gordman continues into its second year as Mil leaps upon his victim during their sixth match (below). April '70—A Boston crab stops Don Carson in his tracks (right). Mil and Carson had a multi-year feud. November '69—The Great Kojika is tortured in Mil's patented backbreaker (below right). Kojika's battles against Mil are considered classics both here and in Japan.

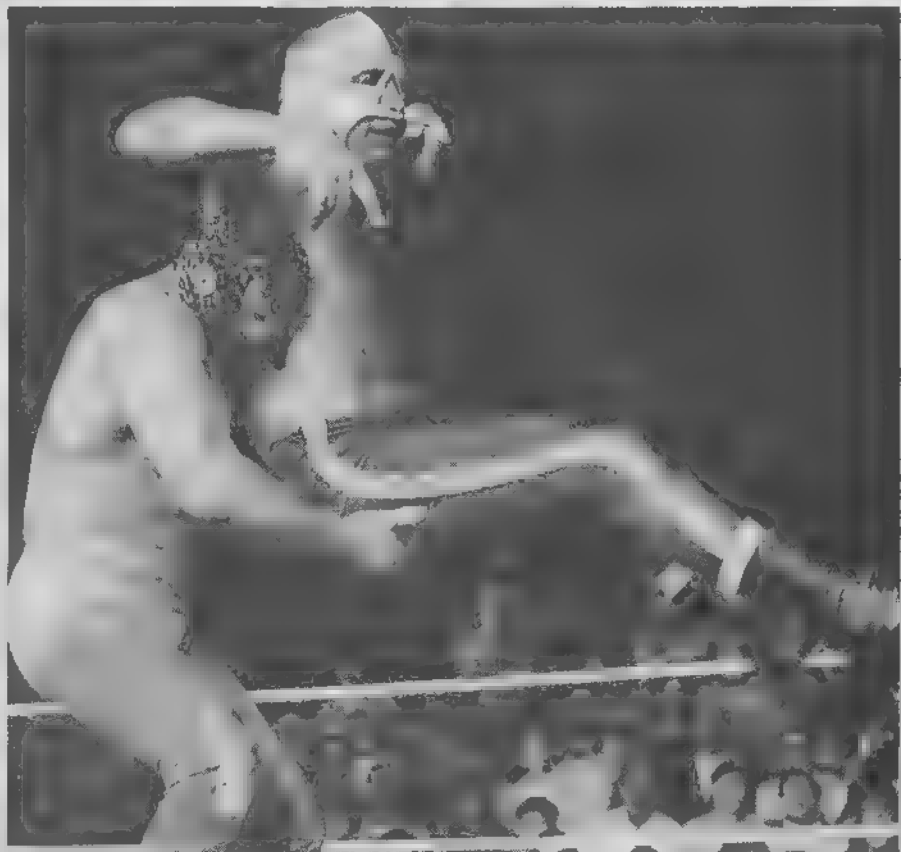




November '70—A classic match Mil vs. Superstar Graham (left). May '71 -Masked El Solitario is tossed by Mil (above). Oct '71—Mil displays the Americas title belt he won from John Tolos.



December '71—Tolos dons a mask trying to prove he's a better masked man than Mil (right). He was whipped trying to prove his point. January '73—Mil appears in a scene from one of his many motion pictures (below). He's a big movie superstar in Mexico.



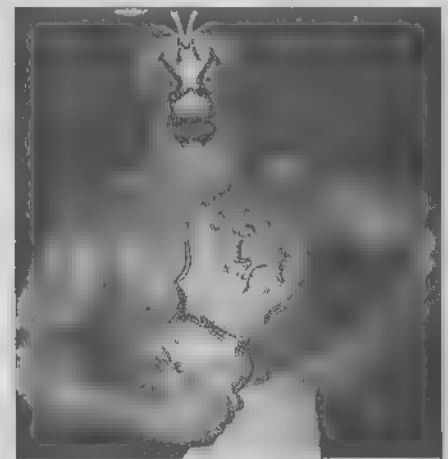
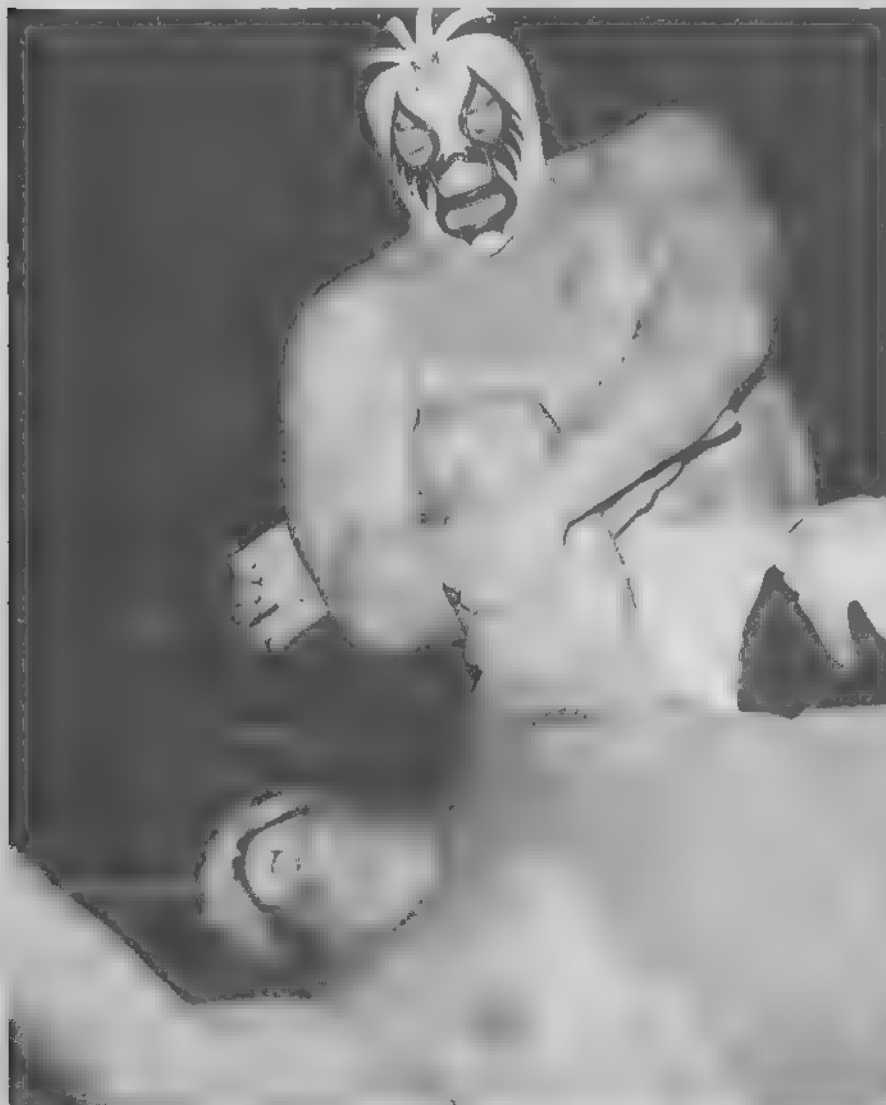


September '72—A sleeper hold is about to finish off Ernie Ladd (above). July '73—Mil's flying bodypress puts the final touches on a very important victory (below).

November '69—Mil tries to wrest the NWA title from Dory Funk Jr. (above left). Only the time limit saved Funk's crown. Mil and his brother, El Sicodelico, do their thing (above right) as Sicodelico does a spectacular flying body press on Massa Saito while Mil wards off Saito's partner, Kenji Shibuya. September '72—A figure-four armbar renders Cyclone Negro helpless (below). There's no way out for him.



Mil proudly displays the title belt of the International Wrestling Association (below), a belt he won after a long tournament.

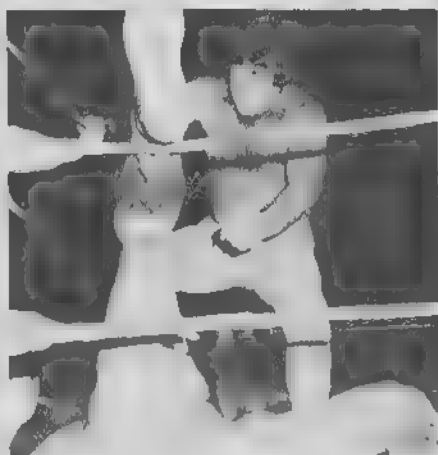
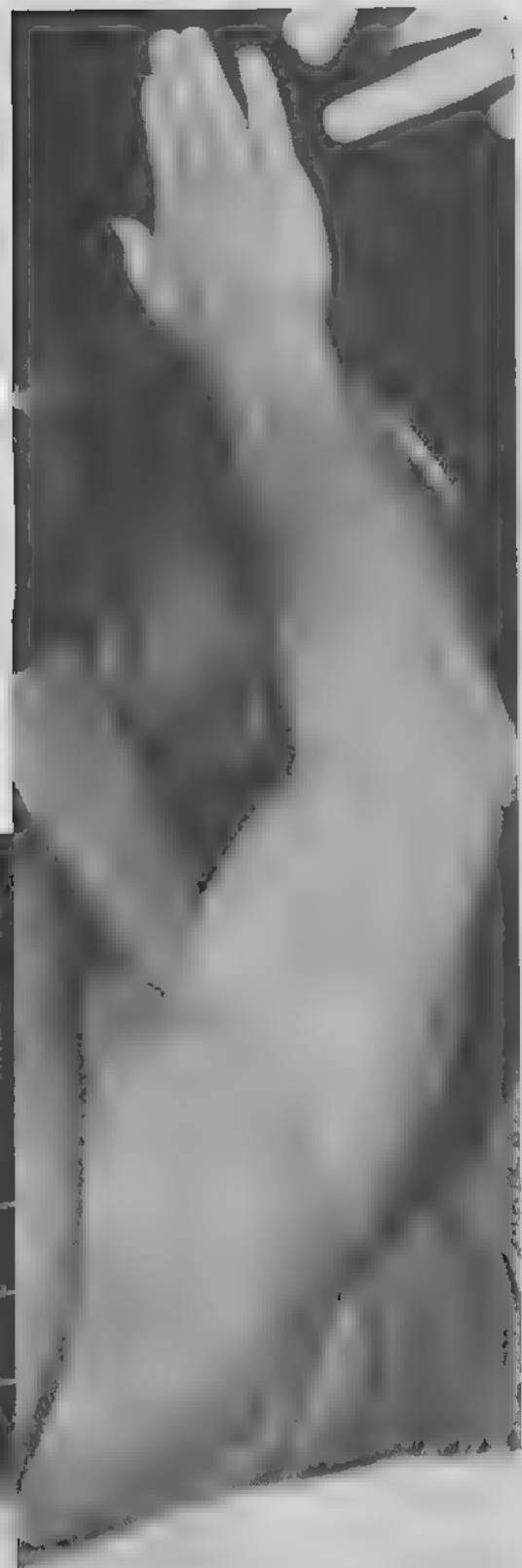


THE VIOLENT

What motivates a man to delight so much in taking great risks and punishing opponents? Jerry Lawler is such a man, and the reasons for his behavior are as strange as Lawler is violent.



WORLD OF JERRY LAWLER



Even against a man as savage as Mongolian Stomper (left, above right, and above left), Lawler manages to prove he's a wildly and cruelly violent grappler. Jerry's brutality knows no bounds.

THE HUMAN BODY can withstand just a certain amount of punishment before the reflexes refuse to obey the brain's signals. At that moment, a professional athlete's career is over. His opponents usually discover this before the athlete does; if the man is lucky, he will survive to realize the truth himself.

Most professional wrestlers are understandably cautious about their bodies; even the most savage grappler will spend years perfecting defenses to protect himself. The future effects of a beating will be far worse than any immediate agony.

There are a few reckless wrestlers who battle for the moment with no regard for their future. They wrestle as if each match was their last. They take crazy chances even in relatively unimportant matches. They glory in an existence more violent than any other professional athlete dares to endure. The price they pay for this wrestling method is indeed very high.

One of the most reckless of all wrestlers is Jerry Lawler. Driven by

some need no one has yet been able to define, Lawler pushes himself heedlessly toward his violent end. Even the men who most hate Lawler are awed by his total disregard for self-preservation.

Perhaps one reason Lawler is so violent an athlete is he enjoys the reactions his violence brings from other wrestlers. His eyes glisten with delight as he confounds opponents with needlessly dangerous maneuvers.

It cannot be denied Jerry is aware of the risks he takes. He even enjoys discussing his dangerously unorthodox techniques.

"As I can figure it," Lawler says casually, "you have only so many years in this business to begin with. What do a few years more or less mean. Anyway, I'm so good, so skilled, I don't even have to worry about most of the clowns I face. They couldn't hurt me with an elephant gun!

"The few guys I face who could actually make a match of it are at a disadvantage before I even enter the

(Continued on page 50)

TODAY, NO WRESTLER commands more love and devotion than Dusty Rhodes. He's worshiped by thousands of fans all over the world. His slogan, "I'm the American Dream," has been taken as a rallying cry by the legions who wish to see him world champion.

Yet, amidst the adulation lies a seed of doubt and worry. No fan can ever really forget the notorious years when Rhodes was one of the most villainous men in the sport. His list of maimings and crippings is long and ugly. Though he's become a fan favorite in recent years, there was a time when he spit upon those who now cheer him. Some can never forgive his vile insults.

The wrestlers who once felt Dusty's wrath can never fully trust Rhodes, no matter what he says or does. They are reminded of his notorious past by the scars still remaining all over their bodies. That Dusty Rhodes is a changed man is too much for them to



The Question Terrifying Wrestling:

**WILL DUSTY RHO
BECOME A
"BAD GUY" AGA**

This is Dusty Rhodes' first printed defense of rumors threatening to destroy his career. It's a story all those who admire "The American Dream" must read and ponder!



DES
IN?

believe.

There remain many people who wonder how long Rhodes will remain a fan favorite. They see his tactics haven't changed appreciably since his savage days; only his opponents have changed. It would take very little effort for Dusty to return to his old ways.

Many of Dusty's fans will ignore any thought of him reverting to his hell-raising days. But those with long memories—those who have been betrayed by other wrestlers—can't shake this all-consuming fear. And the fear seems to be spreading.

The ones fearing Dusty the most are explaining to the others why Dusty can't be trusted. Some are met with anger, some with derision, but still others have found sympathetic audiences. Lately when Dusty has been wrestling, there has been a barely perceptible undercurrent of suspicion. Rhodes realizes he must end this suspicion or else he will succumb to it.

Therefore, Dusty requested we print an interview with him. He talked for more than three hours, something not all that unusual for Dusty. However for much of the time he was deadly serious, very unusual for Rhodes. The evangelist in Dusty, the need to lead a movement, demanded he take this as a life-or-death matter.

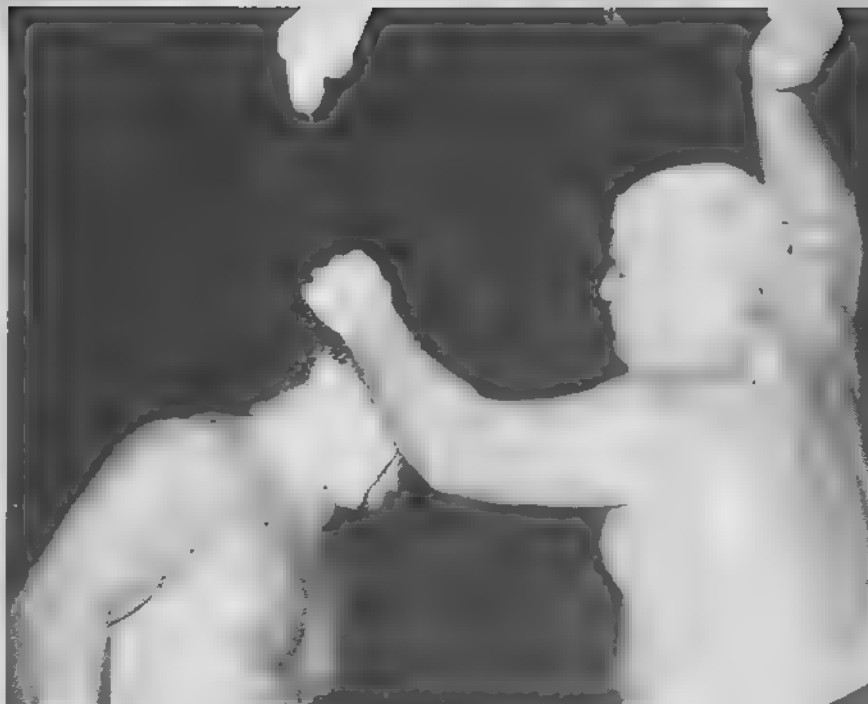
At first, Dusty made the usual pronouncements for which he's famous. "I'm the American Dream," "The people's champion," "One title for my friends," peppered his conversation. He needed the familiar phrases to reassure him. He would soon be saying things never revealed publicly before.

"I've heard the rumors," Dusty declared in his familiar chant, "the lies, the slanders, and the stupidities. People say I won't always represent my fans; that I'm not trying to win the title for them. They say I'll betray my new friends like I betrayed my despised 'friends' many years ago.

"First of all, those men deserved to be betrayed—and every fan agrees with me. They were bad people, cheaters and worse; they were men who insulted the sport and hated the fans. I was young, ambitious, and wrong. I thought those guys, the rule-breakers, would show me a shortcut to the title. All they did was make me embarrassed to be a wrestler.

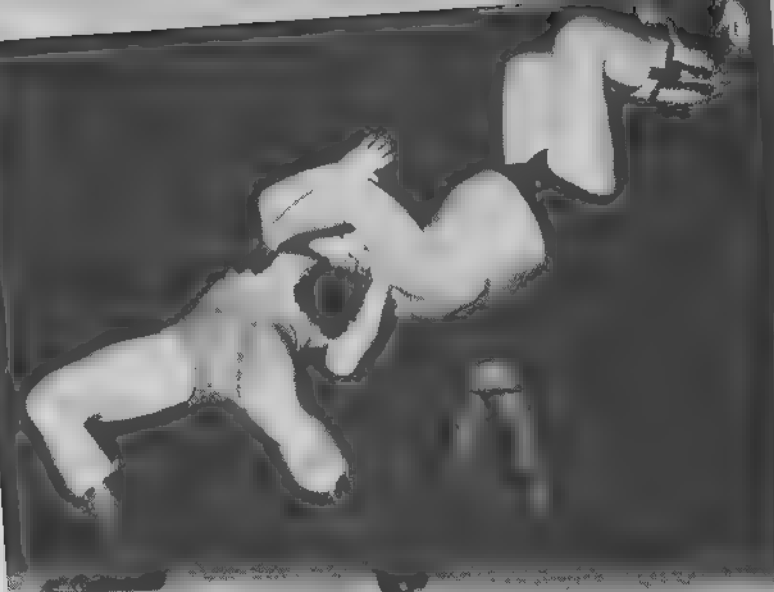
"I looked at myself in the mirror one day and said, 'Dusty, what happened to the pride you once had, the love of people you wanted? What happened? Wasn't it a long way down? Wasn't it a strange way down? You've got to start

(Continued on page 52)



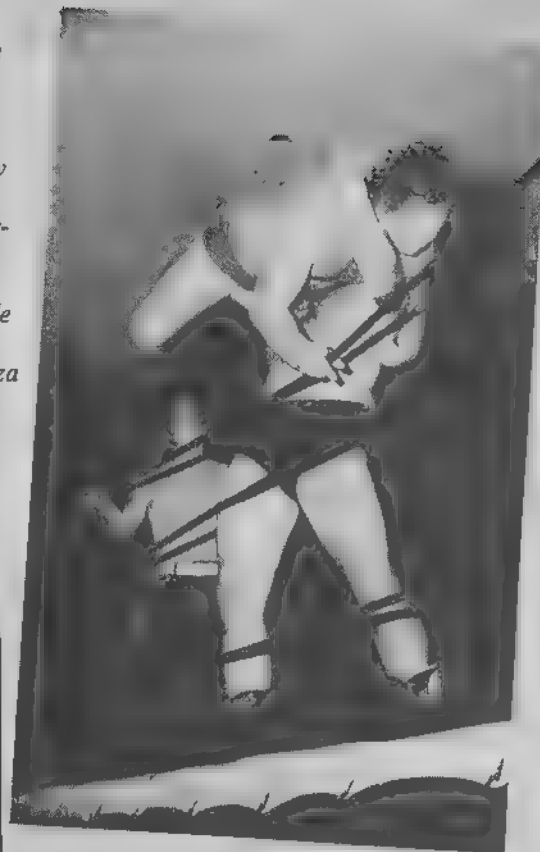
In the past, Dusty Rhodes was known for breaking rules and using illegal tactics, like he does here against Wahoo McDaniel (above). Even then, however, Dusty was often bloodied (below) after a bout.





Left: Dory Jr. suplexes Blackjack Mulligan during a match Dory called "the most important tag team bout of my whole career."

Right: Lanza hurls Terry over the ropes and onto the hard floor!



Lanza bodyslams Dory Jr. to the canvas as hard as is humanly possible. If Dory hadn't taken the fall well, chances are he'd have suffered a broken back!

THE GREATEST FIGHT FOR TEXAS SINCE THE ALAMO!

PHOTOS BY BILL BEACH

THERE WAS MUCH more at stake than personal honor or a record book statistic the night Terry Funk and Dory Funk Jr. wrestled the Blackjacks. To the winner would go the championship of Texas.

Neither team had to be told what the prize was. Each of the four could feel the tension twisting every fiber in his body for weeks before the match.

Until the Blackjacks challenged their superiority, Terry and Dory Jr.

were acknowledged as the premier tag team in Texas, perhaps the greatest in the state's history. The Funks enjoyed this reputation and were careful to protect it.

Then, like a swarm of ravaging locusts, the Blackjacks descended upon the Texas tag team scene and destroyed everything in their path. They were ruthless, merciless, and capable of the most reprehensible tactics. Some of their opponents will

When the two best tag teams in Texas battle for the championship of the state you can expect all hell to break loose. And it did!





never wrestle again.

Blackjack Mulligan and Blackjack Lanza started bragging about their accomplishments all over the state. They also claimed the first time they met the Funks would be the last time the Funks ever wrestled!

"Texas fans!" Mulligan shouted, "have for two long been admiring the second-rate, the rotten, and the simple! Terry and Dory Jr. are a bad joke that long ago ceased to be funny! All they are now is a pain in the butt! The Blackjacks are going to remove that pain!"

"We're number one in Texas!" Lanza added. "The ridiculous reign of the Funk is over. This is the era of the Blackjacks!" Lanza became subdued when he added, "That's if the Funks have the guts to wrestle us!"

At this, Mulligan started ranting, "They know better than to ever wrestle us! Those cowards have enough sense to realize how lousy they are and how much better we are! They wouldn't

wrestle us for all the money in the world. They have too much to lose!"

It didn't take long for word to trickle back to Terry about the Blackjack's challenge and insults. He didn't waste an instant in getting the promoter on the phone and demanding a match be scheduled against them.

"We'll wrestle them tomorrow!" Terry fumed. "We'll wrestle them tonight. Hell, send the rats over and I'll wrestle them now! Better yet, I'll go to them!"

The promoter managed to calm Terry down enough so that he wouldn't attack the Blackjacks without earning some money at the same time. Dory Jr., when he heard of the match, grew serious and immediately started mapping out strategy.

The brothers withdrew to their training quarters and held round-the-clock physical and mental exercises. This match would put their reputations and pride on the line. If they lost, they'd be ashamed to show

Above: A weary Dory Jr. grabs Lanza by the hair and hurls him to the canvas. Below: Lanza stops Dory Jr. at ringside.





*Above: Mulligan smashes a kick to the small of Terry's back.
Below: The Blackjacks join to ruthlessly doubleteam Dory Jr.!*



their faces in a Texas arena.

"Our fans," Dory Jr. explained, "expect a certain level of excellence. They deserve no less. If we lose, we will have betrayed their trust in our abilities. We wouldn't have that happen for the world."

"Not only do we have to win convincingly, we have to use scientific methods to do it. We love the sport too much to see it turned into a cheap brawl."

However, when asked if he would respond with brutality if the Blackjacks introduced those tactics, Dory Jr. declared, "If the match becomes, because of the Blackjacks, simply survival of the fittest, Terry and I will prove we're the fittest. I hope it doesn't come to that, although against the Blackjacks I expect it will. I'd be surprised if it doesn't."

The brothers *were* surprised when they wrestled the Blackjacks, although far from pleasantly.

(Continued on page 48)

**"THE N.W.A.
WILL EVEN LIE
TO STOP ME FROM
WINNING A TITLE!"**





Above. Harley Race is on the wrong end of a Johnny Valentine backflip. Below. Race crumbles to the canvas after receiving a devastating skullcrusher.

Who would you believe—Johnny Valentine or the National Wrestling Alliance?

PHOTOS BY STEVE GOLDSTEIN



SURE OF HIS skills and power, Johnny Valentine fears no man in a wrestling match. However, he has set his sights on an enemy far more powerful than any wrestler. He is now ready to take on the National Wrestling Alliance!

"I've been the victim of lies," Valentine contends, "all of which are designed to make sure I never get a title. I'm a winner, but not a champion. There's only one explanation for that!

"The N.W.A. is prepared to do anything in its power to keep me from becoming champion! It's out to get me. It's afraid of what I'll do when I get its precious title.

"They know I won't be at their beck and call. I'm my own man and always will be. That's not what they want from their champions. The N.W.A. likes its titleholders to follow instructions. I've never listened to anyone in my life—and don't plan to start now just to be someone else's champion.

"There can be no denying I defeated Harley Race, the lackey

who's now the Missouri State champion. I won the bout fair and square. Everyone saw it. But did they give me my just rewards? Not as long as they can make up some silly rule to take them from me!"

The "silly rule" Valentine mentions is the long standing regulation stating no title can change hands during a "death match." Everyone who participated in promoting Valentine's death match with Harley Race knew of this condition. According to everything published before the battle, Valentine was made aware this was not a title match.

"If," Valentine was quoted as saying before the match, "I destroy Race—as I will—I'll have no trouble obtaining chances at both the Missouri and world championships. This will be the match to assure me these chances. I'm more interested in getting Race than winning the title, anyway."

When confronted with this quote after he won the death match, Valentine shrugged it off.

"I don't remember saying that,"

(Continued on page 46)



His body wracked with pain, his legs unable to lift his weight, his brain a fog of agony and sorrow, Andre the Giant lays on the mat (left), injured by Ivan Koloff's foul tactics. Koloff was disqualified for the foul tactics he employed.

ANDRE GET BY TH

LIKE A MOUNTAIN torn apart by an earthquake, Andre the Giant crumpled to the canvas. With him fell his dreams for a chance at Bruno Sammartino's WWF title.

Towering over the fallen mat star stood Ivan Koloff. The infamous Russian grappler had been the man to fell the giant, using a kick to the groin. Koloff could take little pride in his accomplishment. The Russian Bear's tactics had been despicable. No decent athlete could hope to withstand this kind of assault when executed perfectly. And on this night, Ivan Koloff was terribly perfect.

Koloff looked at his injured victim and laughed. Andre struggled to regain his bearing, but the agony was too much for him to conquer. Through the haze of his woozy mind, he could hear the cackling of his tormentor. And then he felt intense pain as he never felt it before.

Ivan's foot slashed into Andre's side. Again and again, the heavy boot smashed into the belly, kidneys, back and groin. Andre's huge bulk twisted and writhed in agony. The referee demanded Koloff stop this reprehensible massacre. Ivan ignored the warn-

ing and continued to stomp furiously. Finally, the referee disqualified Koloff, threatening the grappler with fines and suspension unless he left immediately. Koloff took one last kick for bad measure and strutted back to the dressing room. Angry shouts from fans accompanied his exit; the jeers were music to his ears.

Slowly, Andre struggled to his feet. His huge thighs and calves trembled as they struggled to support his weight. One could almost feel the pain in his sides as he winced. Andre stumbled toward the ropes and held on to them for a minute. His breath was coming hard and it stung his chest. The referee walked over to him and offered assistance.

"I can . . . get . . . back myself," Andre whispered with a wheeze. "I . . . am . . . not hurt . . . badly. I just . . . need to catch . . . my . . . breath." As he spoke, the giant's legs trembled and began to give way.

The referee allowed the proud grappler to lean on the ropes until he had the strength to walk back to the dressing room by himself. The official realized Andre deserved the chance to

(Continued on page 56)

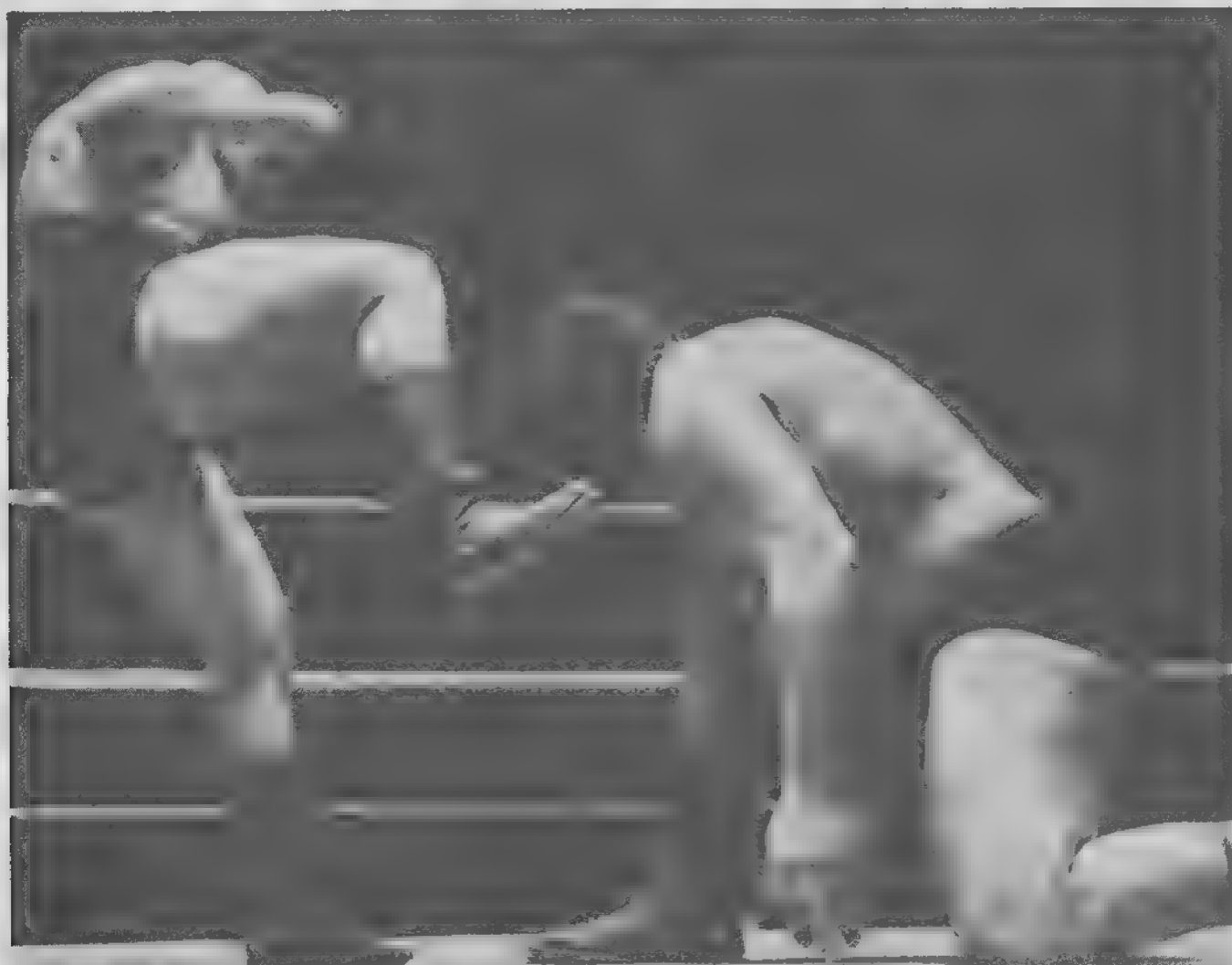


Koloff fails to land with his first kick as Andre catches Ivan's foot in mid-air (above). Andre isn't able to catch all the kicks as Koloff lands a boot into the stricken star's face (right). Before Koloff was disqualified, he almost kicked the giant senseless.

PHOTOS BY TONY LANZA

Andre the Giant needed this match to have any chance of fulfilling his greatest ambition. But after this battle against Ivan Koloff, his noble dream may have deteriorated into a hopeless quest

E'S TITLE HOPES CRUSHED... E RUSSIAN BEAR





Left: Von Raschke screams in agony as Billy Robinson spreads his victim's legs until the muscles start to tear. Above: Baron's legs go rubbery after Robinson lands a forearm smash against Von Raschke's skull.

THE CHAMPION WITH NO BEL

IT'S A SIMPLE twist of fate that has kept Billy Robinson and Baron Von Raschke from being world champion. Each man has been on the brink of being the champion for years, lacking only the lucky break to wrest the championship away from its holder.

Fans will travel hundreds of miles too see either man wrestle anyone. Billy's fans are some of the most

loyal in all wrestling, willing to endure any hardship to see the man they consider the greatest wrestler alive today. Others will stare in terrific fascination at the cruel abilities and merciless wrestling genius of Baron Von Raschke.

So it's no surprise that when the two battle each other, the match takes on the proportions of a championship encounter. The excitement generated by these two

powerful but different personalities is equaled only by the importance of a title struggle. At times, the victories of these men seem more important than the championship defenses.

When the two battle each other, the arena is sold out weeks in advance. People plan their lives so as not to miss this titanic struggle. And

Whenever Baron Von Raschke and Billy Robinson battle, there is no championship on the line. According to both men, there is something far more important at stake **PHOTOS BY BOB RUIZ**



Above: Robinson snares Baron in an excruciating arm-stretcher.

Left: Billy prepares to land a forearm smash to his foe's face.

Below: Von Raschke's claw has Robinson crumpling to the mat.



CHAMPIONSHIP BATTLE NOT ON THE LINE

no one has ever been disappointed, no matter what trouble it took for him to attend!

The last time these two met proved that they are getting more savage toward each other. Every match breeds new scores to settle without resolving the old hatreds. Few can imagine how these battles can become any more intense.

"At times," Billy Robinson ad-

mits, "I get a bit scared when I realize how much I hate Von Raschke. That much hatred can only hurt me. I really had to struggle during the last match to keep my temper under control. Once you get reckless against Von Raschke, you're doomed."

"For instance, take the incident where Von Raschke had me in the clawhold. He should never have

been able to apply it. But preceeding this I had lost my temper and gotten sloppy. It was a stupid thing to do and I paid the price of a temper tantrum. In fact, I was lucky to escape.

"I think Von Raschke was so intent on torturing me, he got sloppy. That's how I worked myself free. If he had coldly put the clawhold on

(Continued on page 58)



BOB BACKLUND: THE ROOKIE WHO WEARS A CHAMPIONSHIP BELT

BY ALL RIGHTS, a rookie should spend a few years working his way up through the ranks before he even has a chance of winning any kind of title. Almost every veteran wrestler will tell you this. And upon entering the sport professionally, most young rookies are told they have a long, hard road ahead on their way to champion status.

But if you say something like that to Bob Backlund, who is still a rookie, he might just laugh in your face.

It isn't that Backlund is rude—he always conducts himself like a gentleman—it's just Bob is a rookie who holds a very impressive title. Recently the young grappler surprised the entire wrestling community by winning the Missouri state championship from Harley Race, a veteran wrestler who once held the NWA world championship title. This feat is quite an accomplishment for the still young backlund.

Ever since he made his professional debut, Bob Backlund has been generating excitement among wrestling fans whereas he goes. Spectators cheer loudly every time he walks into an arena. Many veterans have begun to fear the young man, feeling they will go down to certain defeat if they are matched against him.

Because of his growing popularity—coupled with the growing list of opponents he has defeated—Backlund was given a shot at Race's Missouri

PHOTOS BY CHIP MAXWELL

state title. Harley did not believe the young rookie even had a remote chance of winning. He was proven to be entirely incorrect.

The night Bob won the title from Race, the fans went wild. They knew Bob could do it. And no one was more surprised than Harley Race. Here he was, a man who had won the NWA title from Dory Funk Jr. To be defeated by a mere rookie was almost disgraceful to Harley. However, there really is no shame in being beaten by a wrestler as good as Bob Backlund.

Of course, someone had to tell Roger Kirby the same thing. Soon after Bob had won the title from Race, he placed it on the line against Kirby. And Roger, like Harley Race, thought he would win easily over the young rookie.

But that match solidly proved Bob Backlund had not won his title by a fluke of luck. Against Kirby, Bob displayed a remarkable show of talent and ability. And Roger Kirby is not an opponent to be taken lightly.

One wrestling observer who witnessed the clash between Backlund and Kirby, Charles Granata, described it like this: "I really was impressed by

Bob Backlund. From the beginning of the match it was obvious he was going to beat Kirby.

"There were a few moments when Roger Kirby had control over Backlund. But Bob was able to recover from any maneuvers Kirby may have tried on him. It was remarkable!"

"Bob Backlund is really good. There's no telling where he can go from here. After all, he is Missouri state champion. The next logical step is for him to have a shot at the world title. Now that is something I would really like to see."

The speculation Granata made about a world championship for Bob is echoed by several other fans. It is extremely difficult for any rookie to have a chance at that kind of title. But in Bob Backlund's case, things may be different.

Since he now holds the Missouri title, he is in an excellent position to be a challenger for a title. State championships mean quite a bit in the world title sweepstakes. The question is, will Bob be allowed a shot at the title, thus skipping the usual years of waiting for such a chance? Could Bob be catapulted to instant fame because

He's an inexperienced rookie, yet he's a champion. His fame is spreading, yet to most he's still an unknown quantity. Here is the enigma called Bob Backlund

Right: Backlund has a hammerlock on Roger Kirby.
Below: Both Bob and Kirby are sent into the air with a whip.
Bottom: Bob puts an armlock on Roger in early action.



of his amazing abilities?

It would be difficult to find agreement among wrestling experts about these questions. Backlund has impressed many people in the right places. There can be no denying his state championship is an important consideration. And many wrestling fans enthusiastically support the idea of Bob Backlund as a world champion.

But there are many others in the sport who would violently disagree. While they will acknowledge Backlund's talents, they feel he should wait, take time to develop his talents, and come back in a few years to have a shot at the world title. To these people, Bob's remarkable talents and amazing abilities do not count in terms of championship chances. They seem to

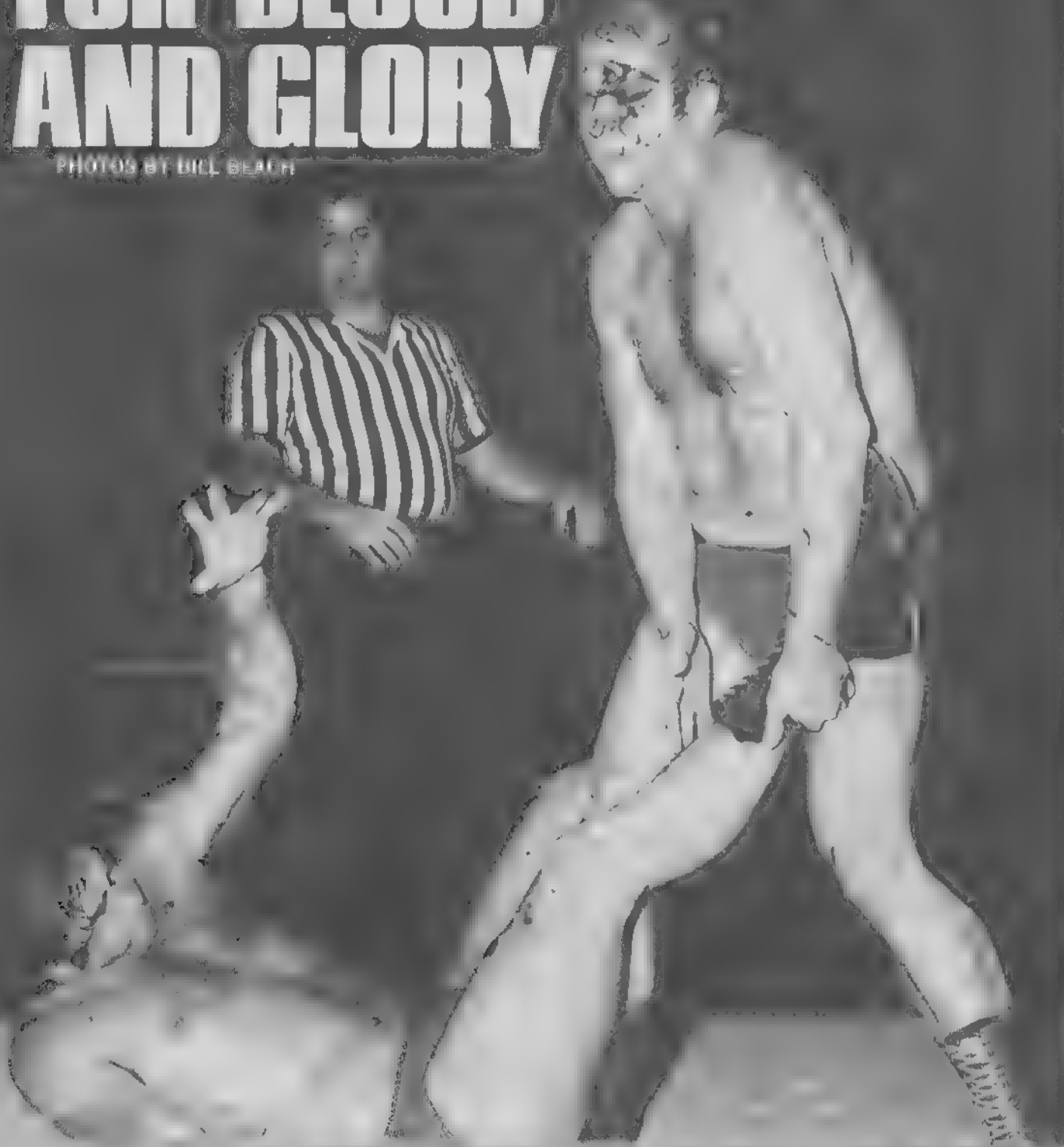
feel that experience is all that counts.

So where does Bob go from this point? He will have to continue defending his state title. And he will probably begin a campaign to be allowed a chance at a world title. It seems to be only fitting.

If there is any rookie with a chance to win a world title, that rookie would be Bob Backlund! □

BRISCO AND FUNK FOR BLOOD AND GLORY

PHOTOS BY BILL BEACH



THE LINES OF strain etched on Jack Brisco's face betrayed his tension. In a few minutes, he would be entering the arena to face Dory Funk Jr; at stake would be Jack's NWA title. Despite their many classic confrontations, neither man could claim superiority over the other.

Perhaps no other man could understand the special difficulties a champion faces better than Dory, a man who once enjoyed a long reign as NWA champion. Jack knows Funk could understand his every need and desire; Brisco does not know what the hunger of a former champion can do to a man. The drives and passions of Funk were a mystery to Brisco.

"Funk knows what I have to do," Jack admitted before the match, "because he's done the same things himself. He can sense when I'm using technicalities to retain the title; nobody knows the rulebook better than Dory. He was a genius at doing everything within his power to keep being champion.



His head swathed in bandages to halt the flow of blood, Dory Funk Jr. is still able to mount an attack against Jack Brisco. Any other wrestler would have quit rather than risk permanent injury from the wounds; Dory continued to battle his hardest. This was the first match in which Funk and Brisco bled. The fans were shocked to see the rivalry between these two stars turn bloody!

Dory Funk Jr. has long struggled to regain his NWA championship, a crown now worn by Jack Brisco. The matches between these two are as complex as the men themselves

"Men who haven't been champion can't anticipate moves like Dory can. He has a trigger mind and great reflexes. He's a cunning scientific wrestler who has tasted the glory of being champion. That guarantees a great match for the fans and the toughest kind of match for me.

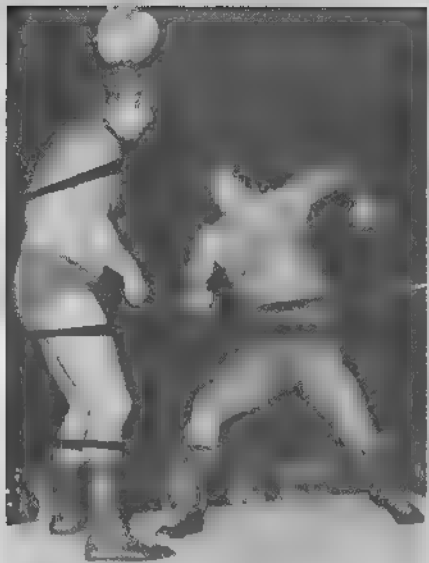
"It's strange, but I both hate and love these matches. They require the most work and most strategy. I've also come closer to losing my title against Dory than any other wrestler. I respect him as much as any man in wrestling. In this business, it's a thin line between respect and fear

"However, I need matches like this. When I leave the arena with the belt around my waist, I know I'm the best wrestler in the world. And I proved it against a grappler whose scientific skills are unquestioned

"At times, being champion makes you lose track of why you became a wrestler. You become so intent on remaining top man you take on challengers who only brawl and



It takes all of Dory's strength to prevent Jack from bringing him to the canvas early in the match. These two superb athletes use all their cunning and power in these matches yet still are unable to settle the question as to which man is the better grappler!



Above: Jack puts his entire body behind a forearm smash late in the brawl. Against the ropes, Dory can't escape. Right: Blinded by his own blood during the second fall, Dory stumbles across the canvas!

have nothing to do with the sport you love. Matches you want to take are put off as you meet guys who are insults to wrestling. It gets to the point when you wonder if it's worth the effort.

"Against Dory, every skill I enjoy using can be executed. When it works against a man like Dory, it's the greatest thrill going. I can't compare the thrill to anything else. That is the feeling I have executing a great move against a scientific opponent. And it is this thrill which makes wrestling worthwhile

As Jack talked, Dory sat in another dressing room. One only had to look in his eyes to see the hunger he felt for the NWA title. Friends have long said Dory lost something of himself when he lost the NWA belt. For years, he has been trying to regain it. In a few minutes, he would make another attempt.

"Champions are different from other people," Dory murmured before the match, "and you don't lose the difference when you lose the championship. You are marked for life. There are times when I wish I had never won it.

"A lot of people have accused me of being obsessed with winning back the title. They don't understand; they've never been champions. If I retire undefeated,

that's different; it's being a loser that eats you up. The Bible says, 'I must go into my father's house justified.' That's the way I want to end my career—justified."

When it comes to talking about the present NWA champion, Dory is

uncomfortable. His dislike for Brisco as a person doesn't mean he underestimates either Jack's ability or the title itself

"Only an idiot," Dory contends, "would claim Brisco isn't an
(Continued on page 62)



HOW PAUL JONES LEARNED SUPER DESTROYER'S CUNNING SECRET

PHOTOS BY GENE GORDON



Paul Jones strides across the canvas purposefully (above) as he waits for his match against Super Destroyer to begin. Once the battle starts, Paul goes after his foe's mask (left), which is just what Super Destroyer hoped Jones would go after!

Paul Jones discovers the shocking secret behind Super Destroyer's mask—too late!

THE SOUND OF a fist smacking the training table reverberated throughout the dressing room. But one blamed Paul Jones for his burst of temper.

"I'm a fool!" Paul shouted at himself. "They ought to put that in the programs: 'Paul Jones, Fool, vs. Anybody Who Wants to Make an Idiot of Jones.' How stupid can one man get? The answer to that is how stupid can I get!"

Someone pointed out that Paul

had a lot of company when it comes to being tricked by Super Destroyer. The fact that he was not alone did nothing to remove the scowl from Jones' face.

"I was beaten before I ever entered the ring!" Jones shouted angrily, as if the loudness could drive the sting away. "He beat me the first time he dared me to take off his mask! And I, like an idiot, went merrily along with him."

Paul was referring to the taunts

Super Destroyer hurled at him. The grappler bragged how Jones could never pull off his mask. He insulted Paul's ability and proclaimed that all of Jones' famous skills couldn't dislodge the mask.

The taunts infuriated Paul, as they were meant to do. Super Destroyer has learned what to say and when to say it, choosing each word for its adverse effect on his future opponent. So Paul's retort

(Continued on page 64)



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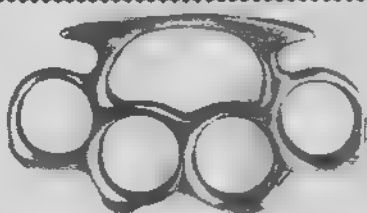
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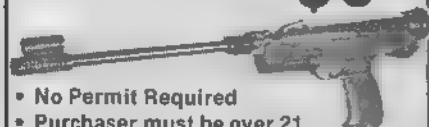


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TANAKA'S VOW

(Continued from Page 18)



Above: Watts snares Tanaka in a headlock and then begins to punch away. Below left: Mr. Fuji is brought into the field of battle by the Cowboy. Below right: Tanaka's manager, Rock Hunter, lends a helping hand.



in his quest shall die horribly. It's usually reserved for a man's enemies before going off to war. Tanaka has just sworn it against his friends,

"Those who are the victims of this oath are usually found dismembered beyond recognition. On their faces is slashed the mark of the *Quen-Shi-To*,

the 'doomed to perish.' I have seen ancient paintings of this murder. Please don't ask me to describe it further.

"There hasn't been a report of this kind of honor slaying for almost a century. I didn't even think anyone existed who still knew the complete chant. It's as if an English wrestler swore by the Knights of the Round-table!

"This isn't something done in anger which Tanaka will forget. It's a sin to do this unless one is in a coldly rational frame of mind, or *Kanno-Wee*, as the Samurai would say. Tanaka knows exactly what he's doing. That's what scares me so.

"I don't know about you gentlemen, but I'm leaving. In fact, if I never interview him again it will be too soon! Everyone here knows I'm no coward, but right now I'm terrified!"

Most of the reporters left with the correspondent. Those few who stayed behind weren't quite sure why they remained. Their Japanese colleague had given them the story. Tanaka could add little to it. After talking among themselves for a few minutes, they all admitted they had to see what a man dedicated to murder looked like after his vow had been made. To share the same space with this man would be an experience never to be forgotten. If they could communicate that sensation to their readers, it would be the high point of their careers.

Those expecting a savage beast were disappointed. Few could remember ever seeing Tanaka so calm. He was almost in a trance. All his decisions were behind him. He was committed to a course of action. His entire body was in harmony with his mission; no sign of nerves at all. He was the most content human being in the world.

"I'm glad you gentlemen are here," Tanaka said gently. "I wish to say something. I want as many people to read it as possible. I'll also write out a nice statement for those who couldn't be here now.

"While I appreciate my friends trying to help me when they think I'm in trouble, I've been disqualified too often because of it. I'm not tolerating it any longer. The next person who interferes in my matches will die. By this, I don't mean I'll hurt him, cripple him, or cause him to bleed. I mean I'll kill him. I will suffer any penalty the law sees fit to punish me with. But I will kill him."

Those who saw the terrified Tokyo reporter don't doubt Tanaka means exactly what he says! □

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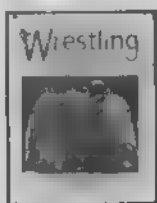
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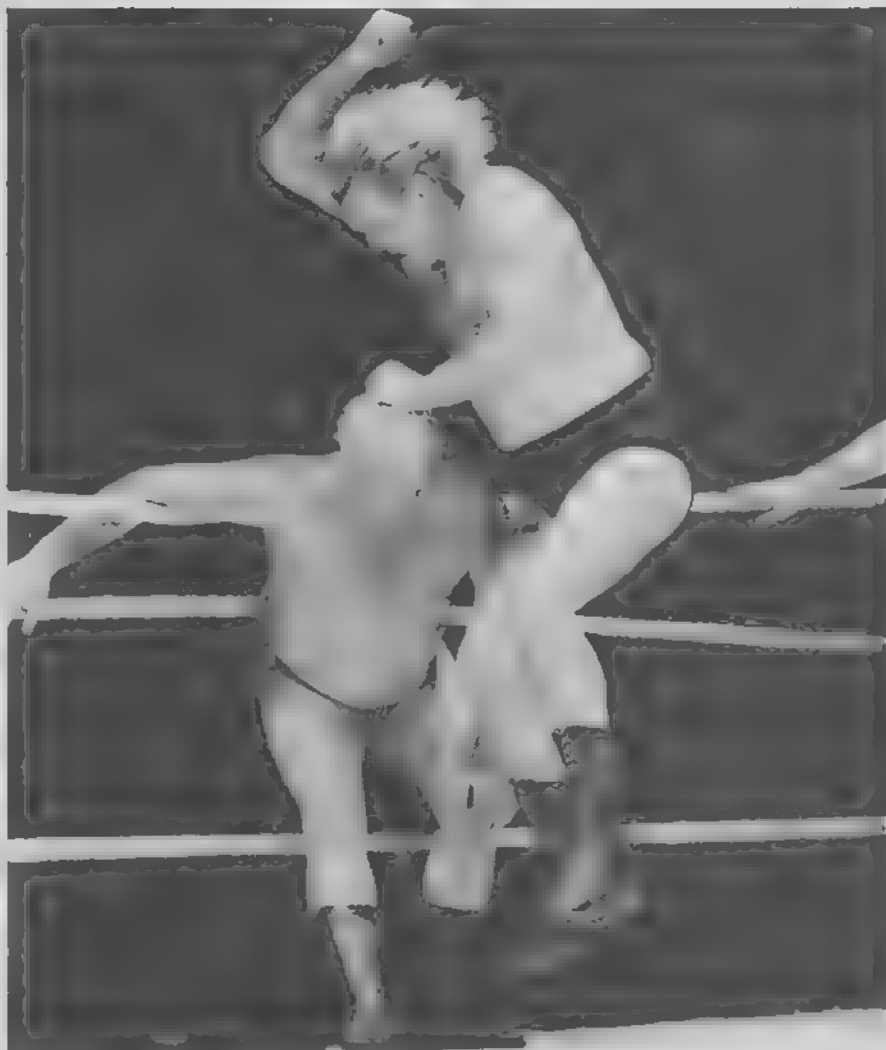
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JOHNNY VALENTINE

(Continued from Page 33)



Johnny Valentine winds up to deliver his trademark maneuver—the atomic skullcrusher. This hold has crippled more than its share of unfortunate wrestlers. Johnny, one of the sport's greatest superstars, claims there is a conspiracy against him by the N.W.A.

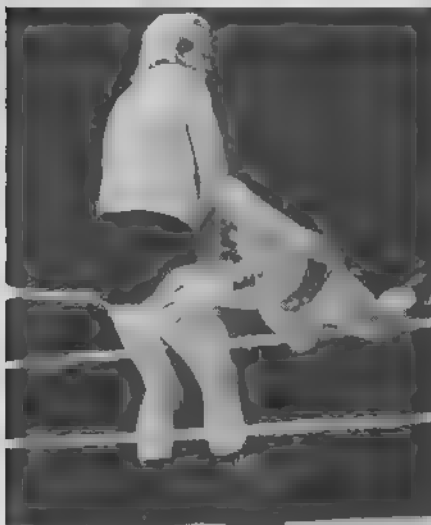
Valentine declared, "nor did anyone say anything to me. I don't care what they said I said. I deserve to be champion. That's the only thing that's important.

"The N.W.A., because it's made up of cowards, has stolen my title. They'd rather have a lackey champion like Race than a *real* one like me. If those guys had any backbone at all, they'd be ashamed of themselves."

Harley Race has been called many things in his career, but lackey is something new. And the proud, ruthless grappler finds the insult particularly galling. He's ready to take on Valentine anytime and anywhere in any kind of match for the Missouri State Championship.

"To hear Valentine tell it," Race contends, "he had an easy time beating the hell out of me. That's a lie and he knows it! That match lasted for more than 25 minutes and for a good portion of that time Valentine was in real trouble. He doesn't say it took him three days to recover from the bruising I gave him—but it did!

"Hell, every rookie in the world knows you can't have a death match for a title. That rule is one of the oldest in the sport. If Valentine says he didn't know it, then he's lying. And I know—and so does everyone else—I'm no lackey! I've never been under the thumb of any man. I've called the shots throughout my life. To say the N.W.A. wants me to be champion because I can be



With Race's boots caught on the top rope, Valentine gets leverage on a painful headlock.

managed is the biggest lie I've ever heard! And I'll shut Valentine's lying mouth the next time I see him—in or out of the arena!

"Here I am, one guy who's laughed at rules and rule enforcers all my life. Now Valentine comes along and says I'm some little guy who spends his time obeying orders. Ask any referee in the N.W.A. if I just sit back and obey rules! They'll tell you about Harley Race!"

Asking the referees isn't necessary. Everyone in wrestling knows Race's reputation for unbridled savagery. To accuse him of kowtowing to any organization seems absurd. Yet such an accusation is being made repeatedly by Valentine. Predictably, not many people are taking Valentine's accusations seriously.

"It's just the ravings," declares Donna Sachs, a respected journalist, "of a man who didn't get a title. You don't have to know Race for more than five minutes to see he's beyond any commission's control. And everyone in the world knows a title can't be at stake during a death match."

"If there is any method behind Valentine's ridiculous posturing, it's that he wants to assure there'll be fan support for him to get another title shot. He may be trying to start a controversy to make the fans demand another chance for him. It's unnecessary in my opinion."

Whatever the reason for Valentine's accusations, one thing has resulted from them. Harley Race is angry as hell! □

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GREATEST FIGHT

(Continued from Page 31)



Above: Lanza pulls Dory Jr. off his partner, Mulligan, when it looked like Funk would pin Blackjack and win the battle. Before the referee could take action, Mulligan was freed. Right: Lanza hopes to maul Dory Jr. with a flying kneedrop. At the last second, Dory rolled out of harm's way.



On the night of the battle, not another fan could have possibly squeezed into the arena. The place had been sold out for weeks. No fan in the state wanted to miss this titanic confrontation.

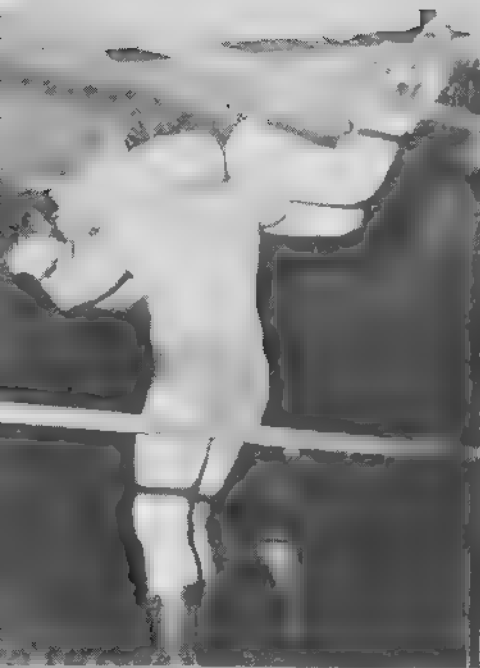
Those unable to purchase tickets offered up to \$50 for a pair of the incredibly valuable pieces of cardboard. This match promised to be one which would be remembered and discussed by fans for years to come.

The bell's clanging had not ceased to echo when Terry and Lanza crashed together in crazed fury. The field of battle became a blur of body flips,

suplex slams, punches, kicks, and body slams. When both men tagged their partners, they were battered and exhausted.

Dory Jr. and Mulligan kept up the furious pace. The raging action seemed destined to destroy either one or both of the grapplers. The ropes soon failed to contain the battle, and the four wrestlers found themselves trading punches on the concrete floor and rolling over onto the ringside seats.

The referee started shouting for the brawling quartet to return to the canvas. Terry and Dory attempted to struggle back, but they were constantly



Terry uses all his strength to bodyslam Blackjack Mulligan to the canvas late in this brawl.

stopped by the Blackjacks. At his point the Funks started battling back. The referee's instructions were ignored.

The official watched this mad battle and realized it would have to be stopped. Taking into account the Funks' brief attempt to follow his orders, he decided to reward them.

"The Blackjacks are disqualified!" he announced. "The Funks are the winners!"

When the Blackjacks realized what had happened, they leaped into the ring and threatened the referee. Angriely, the official started to take off his shirt, daring the wrestlers to come after him. However, looking at his determined face and remembering the stiff fine which accompanies an attack on a referee, the Blackjacks, satisfied their anger by simply shouting insults. When they saw their words were failing to infuriate the man, Mulligan and Lanza stomped angrily back to their dressing room.

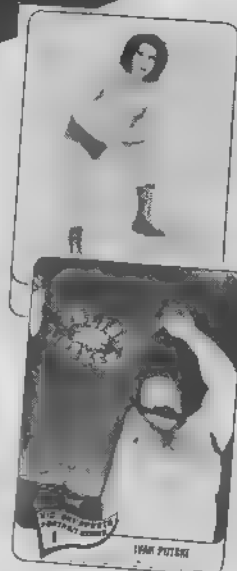
Neither team seemed happy with the results of the match. No clear victory had been won, though all four men proved their ruggedness, power, and courage. The loyalty of the Texas fans still remains with the Funks, though the brothers were far from satisfied.

"We've earned their loyalty," Dory Jr. explained, "but we must continue to earn their respect. Until we're satisfied we've done that, we'll not rest easy. The Blackjacks haven't wrestled Terry Funk and Dory Funk Jr. for the last time!" ☐

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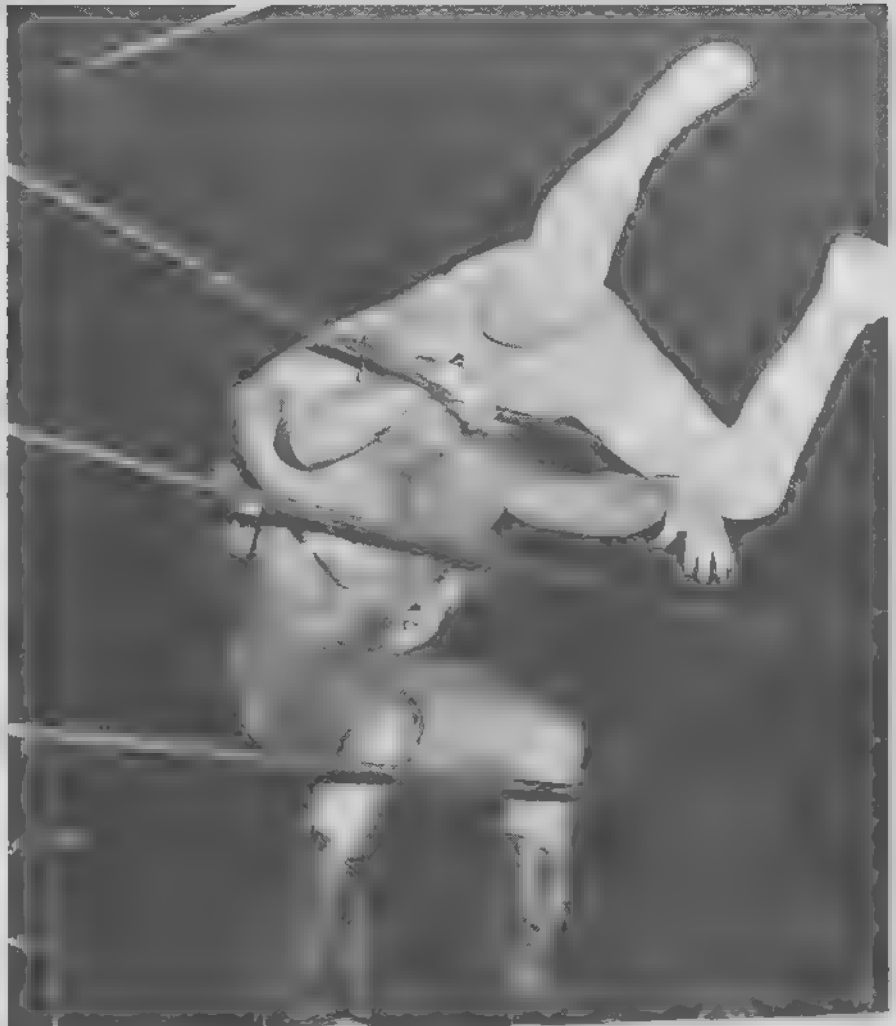
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JERRY LAWLER

(Continued from Page 25)



Jerry leaps over the ropes and grabs Mongolian Stomper. One look at Stomper's face reveals the pain inflicted by Jerry barreling into him. Many opponents have felt the same agony; Lawler's ugly record for crippling opponents in matches is long and terrifying!

arena. They know I go for broke and they are scared. Violence is a major portion of this sport; it is just a bigger part for me than for most. And my opponents know this.

"The risks I face aren't all that big—for me. I'm so talented I can go on years after others would be reduced to vegetables. Even if I could wrestle half as well as I do now, I would still be the best around.

"I've just decided to go further than any of my opponents. This is why I'm the best. Can't be best without taking risks. It's a decision I made when I first started wrestling and nothing has come along to change my mind."

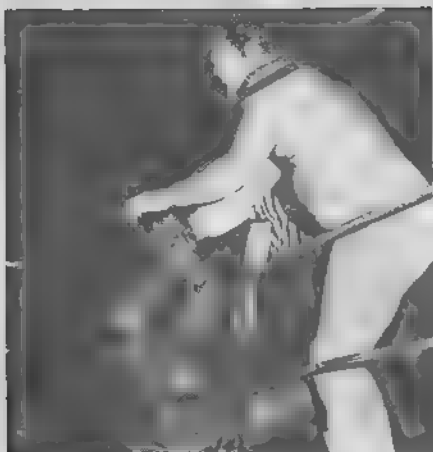
While his opponents acknowledge his risks, they are less than flattering in talking about them.

"Lawler has to take wild risks," Bob Armstrong contends, "because he isn't

good enough to wrestle intelligently. He substitutes violence for skill. If he can't master the maneuvers for a pin, he substitutes talent with cutting the guy too badly for him to continue. He needs to be rough and dirty; he would be a failure as a scientific wrestler."

Some of Jerry's friends who think he is a great wrestler, fear he secretly agrees with Armstrong. They think Jerry is afraid he has to go beyond safety to succeed. Lawler may have no real idea about what being an excellent athlete really is.

These same friends point to Jerry's outrageous bragging as a sign of his insecurity. They see him as afraid to admit an opponent may actually be a worthy adversary. He must maintain his always violent posture to scare his competitors. Jerry doesn't realize he would be a fearsome opponent if he



Bobo Brazil is one of many foes to whom Lawler has shown no mercy. Jerry brutalizes Bobo by pounding his victim's head into the turnbuckle (above); then when Brazil is near senselessness, Jerry slams his elbow into Bobo's neck (below).



never said a word and wrestled scientifically.

Some of these friends have told Lawler their beliefs. To them he has screamed insults until they were forced to remain silent. He is terrified of even discussing the possibility.

Unless Jerry Lawler wrestles less violently, he cannot remain a wrestler much longer. Sooner or later, his body will exact payment for the brutality it has been forced to endure. The price demanded will be the end of his career.

However, there is little chance Lawler will cease his savage way of life. He refuses to even discuss the possibility, preferring to make outlandish claims about his greatness. Those who know him best fear for him most.

"I'll keep going," Jerry says, "until I drop. They'll have to carry me out of the arena a cripple before I'll even consider retiring."

That day may be dangerously close. And Jerry Lawler will have no one to blame but himself. □

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DUSTY RHODES

(Continued from Page 28)



While a member of the hated Outlaws with Dick Murdoch (above) Rhodes earned a reputation as a cruel battler.

However, Dusty changed his ways to battle men like King Curtis (right) and team with Superstar Billy Graham (below).

going back up.' At that moment, I decided to change my tactics."

Dusty paused a moment, his eyes clouding over. He was looking back at a past which obviously pained him. There are things in every man's life which he regrets. Dusty had the misfortune of doing them in public.

"I realized," Dusty continued, "that to make up for my past, I had to show the world how truly I'd changed. I gave my entire being over to winning the fans. I thought I would try to do what they would like and I did it. I talked to them, asking what I could do to make amends. And they told me.

"The fans want one champion over all—the three major titles only bring about unwanted controversy. They also want a man they can look up to, someone who'll fight their battles for them. They want to see the rulebreakers driven out by a man they can trust. I knew I had to prove they could trust me.

"From the very first match after I changed, the fans knew they could trust me. I was battered and bloody, but I won. I've since braved every rule-



breaker in the world. I've been sliced up, gored, kicked, beaten, and punched. I've had enough stitches to make a quilt. There are many scars I'll wear for the rest of my life. But it's been worth it!

I'll continue to take the punishment if it means pleasing the fans and eventually winning the title. That's all I really care about. I want the fans to be proud of me, to be proud of the one true champion. All the agony in the world won't stop me!

"All I ask," Dusty concluded, "is that the fans trust me. If I ever betray them, they can do anything they want to me. I won't ask for a second chance to prove myself. But please accept what exists: a man who risks his life for the love of the fans. Their cheers are all



Dusty stomps on Treach Phillips (above) during the bad old days. Rhodes turned fan favorite soon after this photo was snapped.

I ask in return."

For some, whatever Dusty says will mean little. What he does will only mean a little more, but not enough to convince them. They believe sooner or later Rhodes will tire of being bloodied by men who were once his friends. They see Dusty betraying the fans and going back to his rulebreaking ways.

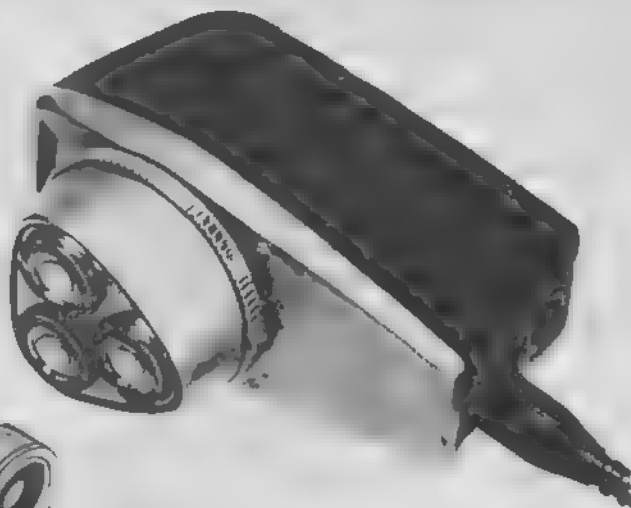
The vast majority of fans will stay by Dusty. They believe what they see and are willing to trust the man who has promised to be their champion. They love him with a dedication few athletes have ever enjoyed. It will take an incredible act of cruelty for Dusty's fans to turn on him.

Yet, no one can predict what the future holds for Dusty Rhodes. All they can do is hope. □

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INTRODUCTION

(Continued from Page 6)

Texas' rasslin' has always held a special spot in the fans' hearts as far as excitement goes. That's why you'll have to read about **The Greatest Fight For Texas Since The Alamo**—first seen in August 1975 and now back for you to enjoy.

Ex-wrestler Johnny Valentine was once the victim of what he called a conspiracy. That's why "The NWA Will Even Lie To Stop Me From Winning The Title!" turned out to be his side of a controversial issue which took years to die down. October 1975 was the first time this was run in **THE WRESTLER**.

Andre the Giant always wanted to win the NWA title but one of his biggest chances was squashed when Andre's Title Hopes Get Crushed By Ivan Koloff. A very informative and interesting story from our November 1976 issue.



Ivan Koloff is responsible for Andre the Giant (above) losing an important title elimination match.

The Championship Battle With No Belt On The Line, from our November 1975 issue, is mysterious as well as controversial. You'll find yourself amazed at the result of this battle.

The very first time any story ever appeared in any magazine about current WWF champion Bob Backlund, was in our September 1976 edition of THE WRESTLER. The Rookie Who Wears A Championship Belt was the introduction of Backlund to a nationwide audience.



The first national magazine article to ever appear on Bob Backlund's career was in our magazine!

Brisco And Funk—For Blood And Glory, a March 1976 highlight, shows you the ugly side of the feud that has kept burning until this day.

Nobody knew anything about the masked and mysterious Super Destroyer until Paul Jones found the key to unlock the puzzle. In our December 1975 issue fans read **How Paul Jones Learned Super Destroyer's Cunning Secret** and almost destroyed his career. □

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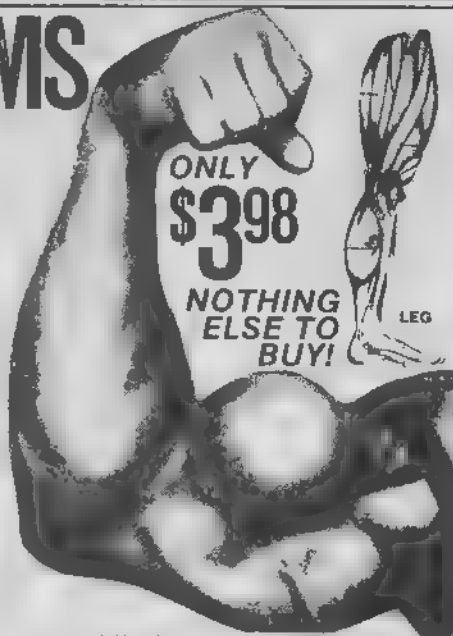
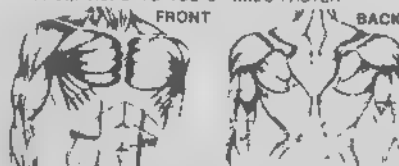
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Andre controls the opening few moments of the match as he has Koloff helplessly sailing into the ring ropes. Ivan was in deep trouble until he started using grossly illegal tactics.

gladly suffered twice as much pain if he could have gained a clear-cut victory over Koloff. Ivan is a contender who must be defeated for any man to earn a title shot. And Andre now wants a title shot more than anything else in the world.

A victory by disqualification is like no victory at all. It doesn't entitle the victor to claim he is his foe's better. Without that claim, Andre's title hopes have been seriously damaged, postponed for an indefinite time.

It was more than an hour before Andre was ready to answer questions. The giant was lying on the training table when reporters were allowed in. His side was wrapped in adhesive bandage, though miraculously there were no broken ribs. The doctors assured everyone Andre would be perfectly fine within a week.

"I want Koloff again!" Andre spat through clenched teeth before a question was asked. "I want to beat him worse than he has ever been beaten before. I have learned a lot about him in this match. I know how to beat him. I know how to finish him off once and for all. I promise my fans I will get even."

"Will your war against Koloff stall your title plans?" one reporter asked.

"I hope not," Andre said softly. "I hope to be champion soon. I cannot imagine not being champion by this time next year. I have promised my fans I would win a title. I always keep my word."

The interview lasted only a few minutes; Andre's agony was too great for him to concentrate for an extended period of time. Mercifully, the reporters left quickly, allowing the grappler to rest.

There were only a few people in the arena when Andre wearily trudged out of the dressing room. It was pathetic to see a human so huge and in so much pain. Those present had to turn away from the sorrowful sight. Andre's pain was just too much to bear.

Across the city, Ivan Koloff was celebrating. Friends and hangers-on congratulated him and filled his champagne glass time and time again. The celebration might have been less joyful if they knew of the hatred burning in the heart of Andre the Giant. □



Andre leaps on Koloff and captures the man in a Marseilles leg stretcher, one of the giant's most effective moves. After being the victim of Andre's complex maneuvers, Koloff believed his only chance for victory was to use the dirtiest tactics he ever knew!

at least salvage his pride.

Like a veteran soldier marching in a parade, Andre stumbled back to the dressing room with his head held high. There is no way of knowing if he heard the affectionate cheers which accompanied him as he limped down the

aisle. It's doubtful his eyes could focus on the tear-stained faces of the many fans who share his agony.

Reporters who stayed outside Andre's dressing room didn't have to be told how serious this setback had been for Andre. The giant would have

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We receive many requests from collectors all over the world for back issues which were sold out long ago. Some collectors offered as much as \$25 for a single rare back issue. Unfortunately, we could not comply because not even one copy remained.

But here is some good news. We recently consolidated our warehouses and uncovered a small number of copies of some issues which had been sold out for years. Now we are offering these extremely rare issues, on a FIRST COME FIRST SERVE BASIS, for \$5 per copy. These copies will not last long, so we caution you to order immediately to avoid being disappointed. Not all these copies are in perfect condition. Some have soiled backs or marred covers and frayed edges. But they are still very rare collectors' items, well worth \$5 a copy.

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BELT ON THE LINE

(Continued from Page 37)



Above: Baron Von Raschke's knowledgeable fingers dig deeply into Robinson's tender trapezius muscle late in the match. The pain almost forced Billy to submit. Only his great courage allowed Robinson to continue. Below: A forearm smash by Von Raschke sends Billy hurtling through the air and crashing to the canvas. Blows like this roundhouse smash are common in these brutal struggles.



me, observing me rather than tormenting me, it would have been a different story I couldn't have escaped and he would have won.

"It worked the same way against me. I had him helpless, his legs spread apart and his muscles almost torn to shreds. If I had been a little more crafty, a little more patient, Von Raschke wouldn't have escaped. But I tried too hard and slipped. Instead of being finished, he was free.

"At times, being effective and being vengeful are two very different things. Once brawn conquers brains, a wrestler is in real trouble. Against someone as dangerous as Von Raschke, it could be fatal."

Baron claims he doesn't worry about getting injured when he wrestles Robinson. All he wants to talk about is what injury he can inflict on his enemy.

"Have you even seen Robinson crawl?" he asks with fiendish delight. "Have you ever seen that pompous moron, Mr. Wholesome, when he's whimpering on the canvas? No more the hero of wrestling, no more the savior of the sport. He's just a clown pleading for me to stop the pain.

"What's even more fun are the squeals of his fans when he's in agony. Their fabulous Billy is getting hurt—my, my, my! Some of those jerks even cry! I mean, that has got to be the biggest joke. Can you imagine anyone caring for that British baboon?"

Both men recognize the importance which is given to each of their matches. And each approaches a match as if it were a championship bout.

"I almost would rather beat Von Raschke than become champion!" Billy declares. "He's as skillful as any champion and much more ruthless! It's a great accomplishment to defeat him, one of the great moments in any career. Now, if he was champion, then that would be a match!"

And Von Raschke says, "With all those idiot fans cheering for Robinson, it's a championship thrill beating him and making them miserable. Wrestling Robinson is as important as wrestling for the championship."

When these two men wrestle, no championship belt is at stake. Something much more important is to be won or lost—pride! ☐

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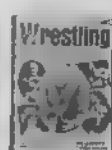
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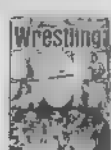
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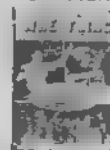
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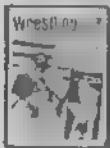
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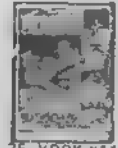
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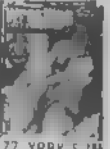
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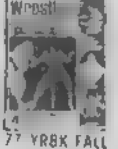
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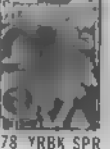
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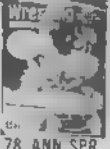
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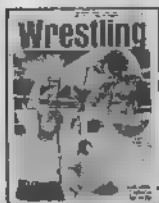
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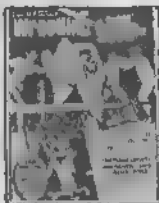
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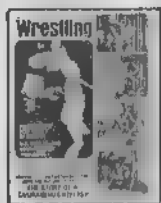
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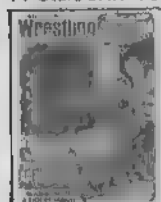
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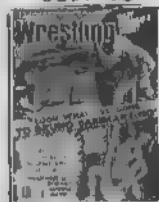
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JAN 76



MARCH 76



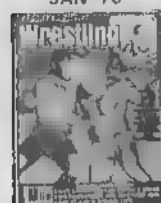
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Pic Bk/Win 75



Pic Bk/Spr 76



Pic Bk/Sum 76



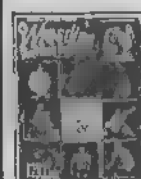
Pic Bk/Fall 76



Pic Bk/Win 76



Pic Bk/Mar 77



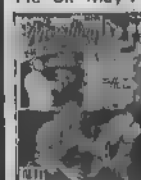
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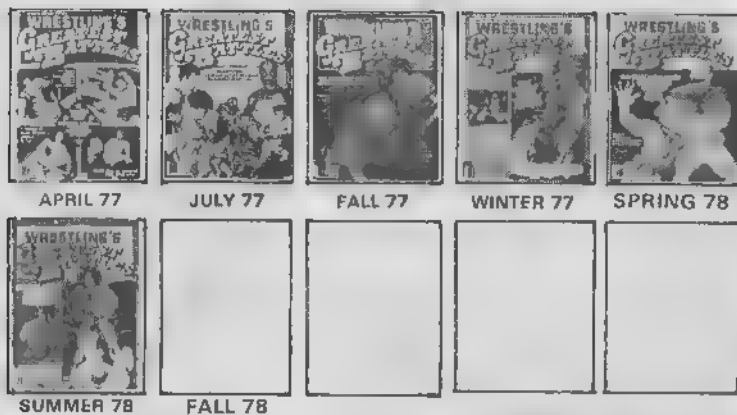


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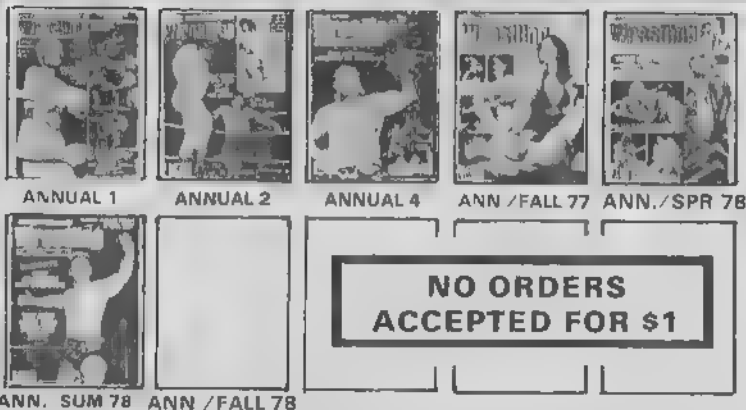


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BRISCO AND DORY

(Continued from Page 42)



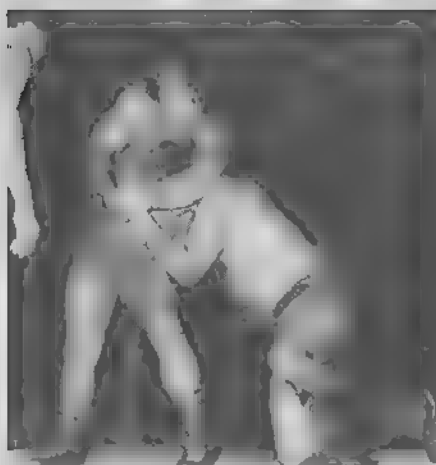
Though barely able to see through the veil of his own blood, Dory is able to catch Jack Brisco's foot before it slams him in the belly. You can't teach a wrestler to react like this; it is an instinct which is born within him and one he never will lose.

excellent wrestler. After all, stiffs don't become champion. Jack is a brilliant wrestling tactician.

"Great ability doesn't make for a great champion, though. Brisco doesn't care what he does or how he wins. I wish I had a penny for every dirty trick he's used to save his title! That kind of battle does little to bring glory to the sport."

But all champions use technicalities to save their titles; it is one of the very few advantages given to them to counter the devastating effects of their brutal schedule.

"Jack goes further than other champions," Dory declares, "using technicalities in place of talent. He's one of the most unpopular champions among other wrestlers



Dory is brought to his knees as Jack increases the pressure of his famed powerful headlock.

I've ever seen. That he's beloved by so many fans all over the world remains a mystery to me and many other wrestlers."

Could Dory's desire for the title make him unjustly harsh about Jack's talents?

"I try not to let my emotions cloud my judgement," Dory maintains, "though I guess they must in some ways. I honestly believe Brisco is an unscrupulous man—far from a credit to the sport. It may sound like sour grapes, but that's what I believe."

When you ask Dory if losing the championship affected him psychologically, as many of his friends claim, the former champion's face clouds over.

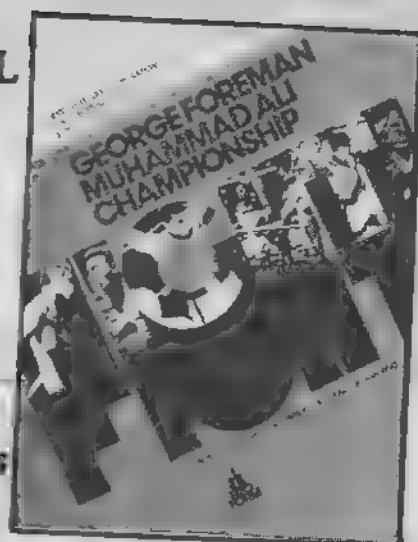
"Except for the special things that happen to any champion," Dory says, "I don't think I've changed any. I know a lot of people have said I lost a part of me when I lost the title. They haven't been too kind about it, either; even morons saying you're finished has to hurt. I'm as good as I ever was, maybe even better. Anyone who says anything different is just a louse who lives on rumors!"

When the match did get underway that evening, it was a magnificent encounter. It was also the first time either man bled in one of the matches. They proudly wore their wounds like scarlet medals. Fans were screaming throughout at their marvelous moves and counter moves. If anyone wanted to know about the best in wrestling, all he had to do was watch this contest.

In the end, it was a draw, so Jack retained his title. However, both men proved themselves champions! ☐

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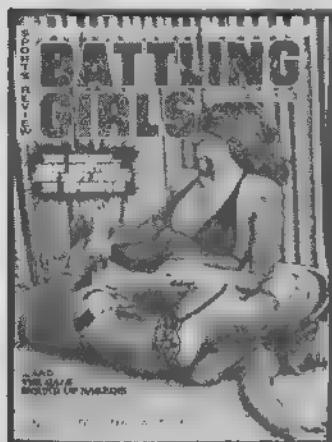
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WINTER 1975

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PAUL JONES

(Continued from Page 43)



Paul Jones' fingers find the strings of Super Destroyer's mask. However, the enormous amount of energy Paul expended in doing this feat was hardly worth the results, a fact Paul realized when it was much too late for him to do anything about his mistake!

was just what Super Destroyer wanted to hear.

"I'll take that mask off," Jones vowed before the match, "and reveal that guy's identity to the world. I'll shut his stupid mouth once and for all. I promise the fans that! This will be the greatest victory of my career."

On the night of the match, Paul stood ready to make good his promise. But if he could have been Super Destroyer's face, Paul would have noticed a twisted smile. All was going according to the masked grappler's plan.

From the sound of the bell, Paul went after his foe's mask. He tugged and pulled and grabbed and tried desperately to unmask Super Destroyer. For all Jones' efforts, Super Destroyer was dominating the match.

Because Paul spent so much time trying to tear off the mask, his wrestling suffered. He ignored his repertoire of wrestling maneuvers to concentrate on the mask. As a result, Super Destroyer was able to counter effectively, tying Paul up in knots. When the time limit ran out, Jones had spent a frustrating



Above: Jones lands a kick to his foe's thigh. Below: Paul signs autographs but always keeps his eyes on his opponent.



evening being made to look like an awkward amateur.

It took him more than an hour in the dressing room to calm down. When he finally gained some perspective on the situation, he issued a challenge to Super Destroyer.

"He made me look like an idiot once," Jones declared, "making me go for his mask instead of wrestling him. His plan was to divert me from my real job by having me concentrate on the mask. It won't work again. He may have fooled me once. The next time we wrestle, he'll have his mask, but I'll have the victory!" ☐

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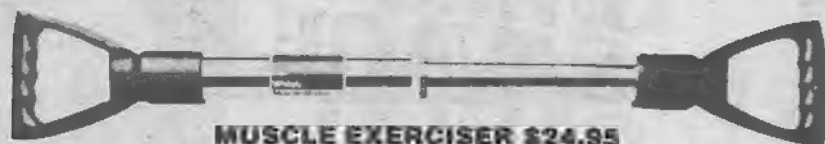
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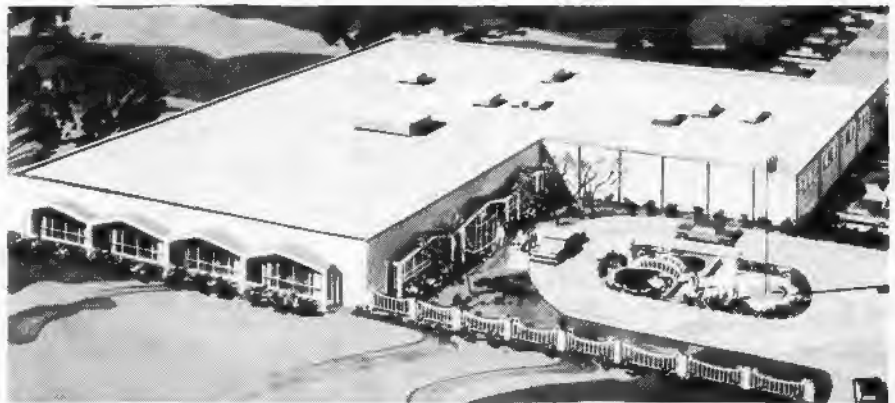
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Yes, a Duraclean business of your own can help you beat recessions, inflation, layoffs, unemployment . . . and worrying if YOUR JOB will be next to go.

Shouldn't You Start Your Own Business NOW... while still employed?

Here are facts: With some ambition and only \$1985, you start your own Duraclean business, spare time, without risking your job or paycheck!

It's a nationally advertised, world-wide business. It does not require skill, more than an average education, or traits except the willingness to work to start grossing \$12, \$19, or \$26 profit per hour. By return mail, we will explain how.

You build by adding servicemen and/or servicewomen . . . and we pay for their equipment so you can expand rapidly.

This is a service to homeowners as well as offices and stores and institutions—a sensational, improved method of cleaning carpets and upholstered furniture right on the customer's premises—the EXCLUSIVE DURACLEAN SYSTEM!

This exclusive ABSORPTION METHOD lifts out dirt and greasy soil with a gentle, almost dry foam. Do-it-yourself "so-called" cleaning methods and scrubbing drive soil deeper. You TAKE IT OUT. Carpets and furniture can be used again in a few hours! This is vital to stores, offices, motels.

You operate under a nationally known name—use an exclusive process recommended by the nation's leading carpet mills and in the editorial pages by House & Garden, McCall's, Parents, and House Beautiful. We help you, step by step.

Your training shows you how to perform your 7 superior "on location" services . . . how to get customers, how to control your expenses, how to make the maximum profit. You are an expert in the care of furnishings. It is an interesting, exciting career.

Carry all equipment in your car trunk until your profits buy your first truck. Phone calls can be received at home.

We back you with national advertising, prepare your local ads and mailings. Merchants, upholsterers, decorators, insurance adjusters refer jobs to our dealers. Your services are in year 'round demand.

As a Duraclean Dealer you are the sole owner of an independent business and are your own boss. You keep all the net profits.

This business can pay you far more than most men earn—with only the talent

and ambition you now possess, and you can operate in any one of three ways.

Many let servicemen do the work while they make a substantial profit on each.

Some men operate permanently in spare time for the extra money they need. Some start in spare time and quit their jobs only after they see they can make a lot more money as a full time Duraclean Specialist.

A one-man business with part-time servicemen can exceed \$30,000 annually. A very high percent is clear profit to you.

The Duraclean Business can be as small as you want or it can be expanded to the level your ambition dictates. There is no limit on income for an ambitious man.

We are about to appoint a limited number of men who are truly ambitious, and want to do something about their futures. We want men who'll follow our proven plans for success and who want—with our help—their own successful businesses.

If this opportunity interests you, send your name on the coupon for a FREE 24-page booklet which gives complete details on the Duraclean business. No salesman will call on you. After you've read the facts, you can decide if you wish to apply for a Duraclean dealership.

Duraclean® International

8969 Duraclean Bldg., Deerfield, Ill. 60015

WITHOUT OBLIGATION send the free booklet which shows me how I can start a Duraclean Business in my spare time without risking my job. No salesman is to call on me.

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BIG MUSCLES? In 7 days

my method of DYNAMIC-TENSION starts giving you results you can feel and your friends will notice. Big, useful muscles. Gain pounds in weight where needed.

Lose "pot belly." Take a good honest look at yourself! Are you proud of your body — or are you satisfied to go through life being just "half the man" you could be? No matter how ashamed you are of your present physical condition — or how old or young you are — the "sleeping" muscles already present in your body can turn you into a REAL man! Believe me, I know — because I was once a skinny, scrawny 97-pound half-alive weakling! People used to laugh at my build and make fun of me. I was ashamed to strip for sports or the beach... shy of girls... afraid of healthy competition.

HOW I CHANGED FROM A 97 LB. WEAKLING TO A REAL MAN.

One day, I discovered a secret that changed me from a timid, frightened scarecrow into "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man" — a "magic formula" that can help turn you, too, into a marvellous physical specimen... a REAL man from head to toe... a man who STANDS OUT in any crowd! What's my secret? "DYNAMIC-TENSION" — the natural method! No theory. No gadgets or contraptions. You just do as I did. Simply take the "sleeping" muscles already present inside your own body — build them up — use them every day in walking, bending over, reaching, even sitting! Almost before you know it, you're covered with a brand-new suit of beautiful, rock-hard SOLID MUSCLE!

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So sure am I of how fast "Dynamic-Tension" works that I make this offer to you. Try my course for 7 days and in even that short period of time you will have results that not only you can feel, but your friends will notice, or it costs you nothing. Send for my free book. **WRITE NOW!**

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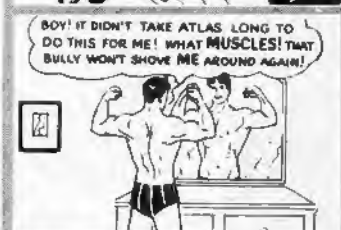
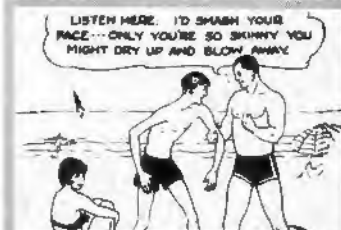
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